THE STORY OF FRANCE

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"ROMANCE OF THE NETHERLANDS," "STORIES OF KING ARTHUR'S KNIGHTS," "STORY OF JOHN RUSKIN"

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THE STORY OF FRANCE

CHAPTER I

THE DRUIDS

LONG, long ago the land which we now call France was called Gaul.

Gaul was much larger than France is to-day, although north, south, and west France has the same boundaries now as Gaul had in the far-off days of which I am going to tell you.

What these boundaries are, many a geography lesson will have shown. But, lest you have forgotten, take a map of Europe, and you will see that on the north France has to protect her the English Channel, on the south she is guarded by the Mediterranean and the Pyrenees, while on her west roll the waters of the Atlantic. These mountains and waters were also the bulwarks of ancient Gaul.

It was on the east that Gaul stretched far beyond the boundaries of France, reaching to the Alps and to the swift-flowing river Rhine.

And it is of Gaul, as it was in those far-off days many centuries B.C., that I wish first to tell you.

The large tract of land called Gaul was then little more than a dreary waste of moor and marsh, with great forests, larger and gloomier than any you have ever seen.

Through these forests and marshlands terrible beasts prowled—wolves, bears, wild oxen. Herds of swine, too, fierce as any wolves, roamed through the marshes. These

had been tamed enough to answer to their keeper's horn.

As for the people who lived in Gaul in those days, they were almost as savage as the wild beasts. Half naked, they too, like the wolves and bears, wandered through the marshes and forests to seek for food.

They were tall and strong, these huntsmen, with blue eyes and yellow hair. If you had met a savage Gallic warrior, you would have thought he looked wild and fierce enough to frighten any foe. But, you know, people do not often see themselves as others see them. That is why the Scottish poet Burns sang—

"O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us."

These warriors with blue eyes and yellow hair thought that they did not look at all fierce, and so they would often stain their yellow locks red, to make themselves appear, as they thought, terrible to their foes.

Although they wore few clothes, the Gauls were fond of ornaments, and often they adorned themselves with heavy chains and collars of gold.

Stalwart warriors as well as huntsmen were these yellow-haired men. Different tribes or clans, led each by his own chief, would hunt one another and fight to the death.

In these far-off days the clans often fought to win a piece of land on which another clan had settled and built huts. It is true that the huts were rough and comfortless, yet they were the only shelter these wild folk knew from the storm and cold. Very often, too, it was bitterly cold. In winter the rivers were frozen for weeks at a time. They were frozen so hard that they were used as highways, and heavy wagons with great loads could be rolled or drawn across the solid ice without a fear that it would give way.

The Gauls built their huts of wood and clay, covering them with straw and with branches cut from the great

trees of the forests. They were huddled close together, and round them the Gauls threw up a rough wall of timber, earth, stone. This wall was meant to protect the town or encampment, as it was called, from the attacks of an unfriendly tribe.

Yet when the war-cry was heard drawing nearer and nearer to the little settlement, the people, after all, did not always wait to defend their town.

It was so simple to build other huts, that sometimes, at the sound of the terrible war-whoop, the whole clan would flee for greater safety into the depths of the forests.

Here, to be ready for such a flight, they had already felled trees, which they now set to work, in grim earnest, to pile up into an enormous barricade between themselves and the foe that was all the while drawing near.

After the battle was over, the victorious clan held a great feast, to which they brought the prisoners whom they had taken in the fight. While their victors danced wild dances and shouted triumphant war-songs, the poor prisoners looked on with sullen faces and with heavy hearts, for well they knew what would now befall them.

They would be tied to trees and burned, or, if they escaped that cruel fate, it would perhaps be to be flogged to death. Their conquerors were pitiless, the prisoners knew it well. They might even be sacrificed to the gods. For the Gauls never doubted that their gods demanded human sacrifices.

But though the tribes which wandered now here, now there, throughout the land of Gaul were wild and warlike, yet already they had priests to whom they yielded obedience as well as reverence.

These priests were called Druids. You have read of Druids in the early history of your own land, and you may have seen some of the temples in which they worshiped long years ago. The temples were but simple circles of stones, open to the blue sky and fresh winds of heaven.

These stones are still to be seen in England and in the west of France.

Usually the Druids were grave old men with long white beards, who were believed to be very wise. They were not often seen, for they dwelt in the depths of some sacred wood, where, silent and alone, they sought to learn the will of their gods.

But once every year the Druids, clad in their long white robes, with sickles in their hands, would summon the wandering tribes together, and go with them into the forest. There, under the oak trees, they would gather. The trees themselves were cold and bare, but they were sacred, and upon them grew the mistletoe with its green leaves and pure white berries.

The mistletoe as well as the oak was sacred to the gods, and with their sickles the priests cut it down and carried it in triumph to their temples.

The Druids were not only the teachers of the people, they were also their poets and priests. It was from them that the Gauls learned to sacrifice their prisoners to the gods.

From the Druids, also, the Gallic warriors heard that when they were slain in battle, they would live again in some other world the same life that they had lived on earth.

When they heard this, the warriors said, "In this other world we must have our slaves, our horses and our dogs, to wait upon us as they have done here. Our swords and our shields, also, we will not leave behind us."

Thus it was that when a great warrior was buried, his slave, his horse, his dog, each was buried alive with his master. His sword and shield also were not forgotten. And the white-robed Druids who ruled the Gauls in these olden days, though they had the power, did not forbid this cruel rite.

CHAPTER II

THE PATRIOT VERCINGETORIX

As I have told you, different tribes in Gaul fought one with the other. But sometimes the clans forgot their own quarrels, that they might join together against a common foe. Feeling that even then they were not strong enough, they would appeal to Rome to help them against the fierce German warriors, who poured across the river Rhine and invaded Gaul.

These Germans, when they were victorious, treated their prisoners even more cruelly than the Gauls treated each other.

It was natural that the Gallic chiefs should ask the Romans to help them, for the Romans were a strong people, with well-disciplined legions of soldiers. Already, too, they had a special interest in Gaul, as their provinces were scattered up and down the country.

Long before this, in 283 B.C., a few Roman families, led by three Roman officers, journeyed to a part of Gaul called Cisalpine Gaul. Here they took possession of some ground on the borders of the Adriatic Sea. On the ground they planted the standard of Rome, a golden eagle, which they had carried before them on their journey.

The officers ordered a round hole to be dug, and in this hole they laid a handful of earth and a cluster of fruit, which, along with the standard, they had brought from Rome.

Taking a plow, and yoking to it a white bull and a white heifer, the settlers then drew a furrow round a large

piece of ground, after which the bull and the heifer were sacrificed to the gods of Rome, and the ceremony was complete.

Thus the first Roman colony was planted in Gaul. Fifteen years passed and another Roman colony was founded, with the same rites, and then another and another. And wherever the Romans went, they drained the land and built houses, bridges, towns.

Many of the Gauls among whom they dwelt learned to copy these Roman buildings, which were so much better than their own rude huts and irregular villages.

The first time a Roman army came to Gaul, it was led by a great general, called Scipio, and landed about 218 B.C. at Massilia, which in those long-ago days was the name for Marseilles.

Massilia opened its gates to the Romans, and welcomed them to its city, which was already an ancient one, having been founded by a Greek, 600 B.C.

More than a hundred years after the Romans had settled at Massilia, a terrible earthquake startled the inhabitants of northern Europe. A fierce German tribe, feeling no longer safe in the north, began to travel southward, and never stopped until it reached Gaul.

Crossing the Rhone, the barbarians came to the camp of Marius, a Roman general.

They at once offered to fight, but Marius paid no heed to the taunts by which they tried to rouse him, and allowed them to pass on their way.

Some time later he broke up his camp and followed the invaders. He found them, among the mountains, not far from the town of Aix. Here, in 102 B.C., Marius fought with the rude Germans and defeated them with terrible slaughter.

The victory of Aix was an important one; for had the barbarians conquered, they would probably have gone on to Italy to try to vanquish Rome. Thus they might have become the masters of the world.

Two years after this victory, the man who was to succeed Marius was born. This was Julius Cæsar, one of the greatest and most ambitious generals of Rome.

For years Gaul suffered from the invasion of the Germans. But when, in the year 62 B.C., great hordes of these warriors poured across the Rhine, more than ever determined to wrest the land from its owners, the Gauls turned again to Rome, begging for help.

The Romans, eager to keep their own colonies, perhaps also eager for new conquests, sent Julius Cæsar, who was now a man thirty-eight years of age, to the aid of the Gauls.

Even by the well-disciplined troops of Rome the Germans were not easily beaten, but at length Cæsar utterly routed them, and they fled in confusion toward the Rhine, anxious only to go back to their own land.

Now that they were delivered from their foes, the Gauls would gladly have seen the brave Roman warriors march back to Rome. But the Romans did not mean to go away, as the Gauls very soon found out. They meant to stay until they were themselves masters of Gaul.

This was no light task, for the Gauls dearly loved their independence. At the end of six years, though some tribes had been forced to submit, the struggle against Cæsar was in reality fiercer than it had ever been.

Their country was in danger, and the Gauls, forgetting their own quarrels, determined to unite against their foe in one last great attempt to win freedom for themselves and their country.

A young Gaul was the chief leader of the revolt. His real name is not known, but in history he is always called Vercingetorix, which means "chief of a hundred kings."

Vercingetorix belonged to a powerful tribe, and Cæsar, with his usual wisdom, had tried to win the young chief over to his side. But he had failed. And now, about 53 B.C., Vercingetorix had come down from the mountains with his

followers and seized Gergovia, the capital of his tribe and his own birthplace.

The Gauls flocked to his standard. But whether love drew them or fear, it is difficult to tell, for Vercingetorix had decreed that whoever stayed away should be punished with torture or with death.

Cæsar was in Italy when the rebellion led by the young Gaul broke out, but he no sooner heard of it than he hastened back to Gaul, and put himself at the head of his well-trained legions.

Vercingetorix knew he could not hope to destroy the Roman legions in the open field, but he could attack small bands of the enemy and harass their movements.

Moreover, he begged the people of Gaul to destroy their dwellings, their springs, their bridges, their provisions, so that when Cæsar came he might find nothing but ruins.

But in spite of all that Vercingetorix could do, Cæsar reached Gergovia, and at once laid siege to the town, which was really a rough cluster of huts, surrounded by strong barricades made out of trunks of trees.

The Gauls were not used to be shut up in a town, and soon they were clamoring to be led against the enemy.

But Cæsar had seen tribe after tribe joining the young Gallic chief. One of his legions, too, when ordered to assault the walls of Gergovia, had been driven back with the loss of forty-six of its bravest officers, and Cæsar thought it was time to raise the siege.

The Gauls could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw the Roman army withdrawing. It was the first time that Cæsar had been unable to take a Gallic town, and the Gauls, shouting in triumph, declared that their foe was vanquished. Vercingetorix himself believed it would now be well to strike a blow at the enemy, and placing himself at the head of his followers, he led them against the retreating army. Within nine miles of the fugitives he pitched his

camp, and gathering together his chiefs he spoke to them these proud words:

"Now is the hour of victory; the Romans are flying to their province and leaving Gaul; that is enough for our liberty to-day, but too little for the peace and repose of the future; for they will return with greater armies, and the war will be without end."

Then the young Gaul ordered his troops to pursue the retreating foe. He did not know that Cæsar had added to his army a large number of horsemen from the fierce German tribes which were still wandering through the country, and had promised them lands and plunder, as well as wages, if they proved faithful.

Now the battle began. One band of Gauls seized a road by which the Romans must pass, hoping to bar their passage. While the fight raged fiercely at this point, the wild German horsemen dashed up a height held by the Gauls, drove them away, and chased them toward a river where Vercingetorix was stationed.

Cæsar ordered his legion to attack the Gauls as they fled toward their leader, and soon the fugitives dashed in among Vercingetorix's company followed by the Romans. The Gallic army was in utter confusion.

With great difficulty Vercingetorix rallied his men and ordered a retreat. The Roman general followed, taking many prisoners, and killing more than three thousand Gauls.

Vercingetorix succeeded in reaching a town called Alesia, and with the remnant of his army he at once began to fortify the place.

As you may imagine, Julius Cæsar had soon followed the Gauls to Alesia. When he saw them within the walls of the town, he determined to keep them there. He ordered his great army at once to surround the town and begin to dig trenches and build forts to keep the Gauls from escaping.

Again and again Vercingetorix tried to destroy the

Roman forts and trenches, but each time he was beaten back into Alesia.

But the young Gaul had a brave spirit, and he still hoped to win the day. One night, by his orders, some Gallic horsemen stole quietly and unnoticed through the Roman lines, and hastened each to his own tribe to summon it to arms.

Before long the Gauls throughout the country were roused and galloping to the help of Vercingetorix.

And so it happened that one day the Romans were surprised and attacked in their entrenchments by a new army of Gauls.

A terrible struggle followed. Each time the new Gallic army attacked the enemy, Vercingetorix led his men out of the gates of Alesia and joined in the assault.

The Romans fought desperately. To be beaten by these rough, untrained warriors would humble their pride in the dust.

The Gauls, too, strained every nerve to win. To be beaten by the Roman legions would mean the loss of home, of country, of freedom.

For four days the battle raged, and then at length the well-trained troops of Rome were victorious.

The Gallic army had been cut to pieces, and Vercingetorix and a few men pushed back into Alesia. Escape was now impossible.

Then Vercingetorix, with rare courage, offered to give himself up to the Romans, that his followers might go free, and not one voice was raised to bid him stay.

Too heedless of his life, now that his country was lost, the young Gaul did not wait to send before him a herald of peace.

Mounting his war-horse, he rode away alone into Cæsar's camp, and found the great general seated on his tribunal to give judgment.

Dismounting in silence, Vercingetorix threw his weapons

at the feet of his conqueror; then flinging himself down beside them, he pleaded for mercy.

But Julius Cæsar had no pity. Rome's stern motto was "Vae Victis," Woe to the vanquished!

Vercingetorix was loaded with chains and taken to Rome. For six long years he was there in a dungeon.

Then, when Cæsar came to Rome to give thanks to the gods for his victories, Vercingetorix was led, with other prisoners, in the triumphal procession. Afterwards he was taken back to his dungeon and beheaded.

After Vercingetorix had given himself up to Cæsar the war still dragged on, but without their young chief the Gauls fought ever more and more listlessly. By the end of the year 51 B.C. the country was subdued. Cæsar treated the conquered people kindly, and even enrolled among his own troops Gauls whose bravery he had proved.

One legion, too, he formed almost wholly of the conquered people, calling it the "Alauda" or "Lark." For on their helmets the soldiers of this legion had engraved the figure of a lark, the old Gallic symbol of wakefulness.

CHAPTER III

KING ATTILA

For five centuries Gaul was now ruled by the Romans. The people hated their conquerors, for they were forced to pay them taxes, and until now, 50 B.C., they had been free, owing obedience to none. Taxes were to them the sign of their bondage.

Yet the Romans were not cruel to the people they had conquered. Indeed, they taught them many useful things, so that gradually the people became less wild and savage. Instead of mud huts they learned to build comfortable houses, and soon they possessed cities of which they were proud. They drained the dreary marshlands, made good roads and built bridges. They even dressed as did their conquerors, and spoke their language.

Many of the great forests, too, were cut down, and thus the wild beasts gradually disappeared, so that, instead of wild hogs, quiet sheep were to be seen browsing in the fields.

You remember that the winters in Gaul were bitterly cold. Now, as the forests were gradually cut down, the rays of the sun reached the earth and warmed it, so that the weather grew less severe.

In the south of Gaul the Romans then began to plant vines. These took root and spread, so that when Gaul became France the vine was already known all over the southern part of the country. Olives, too, began to be cultivated, and the olive crops were soon as valuable as the corn crops.

Finding that the Druids, those mysterious white-robed priests, encouraged the Gauls to offer human sacrifices, the Romans banished them from the land. But while the Romans did their utmost to stamp out the ancient Druidical worship, in later years they brought to the Gauls a new religion, for about the year 244 A.D. Rome sent seven bishops into Gaul.

Little by little the Gospel spread among the fierce Gallic warriors, moving them sometimes to love and always to wonder, so strangely in their ears rang the tidings of peace and goodwill to man.

About seven years after the bishops reached Gaul, a church was founded at Paris, which in these far-off days was called Lutetia.

Lutetia had already become the capital of northern Gaul, and from this city the Christian religion began in 251 A.D. to spread rapidly all over the land.

Meanwhile the power of the Romans was growing less and less. And the wild barbarian tribes across the Rhine thought that now was the time to sweep down upon Gaul, and wrench her from the nation whose legions they had been used to fear.

The Germans, as these wild tribes were named, were in appearance much like the Gallic tribes they had come to conquer.

For the Germans had blue eyes and long yellow hair like the Gauls, although they were much taller than they, while over the Romans they towered like giants.

But while the Gauls wore bright colors and adorned themselves with ornaments, the Germans were content to wear only a rough skin, which they fastened round their bodies with a skewer or pin.

In other ways, too, the tribes were unlike each other, in spite of blue eyes and yellow hair.

The Gauls were ever ready to talk, to tell of their wonderful deeds, which deeds had not always taken place;

for the Gaul's imagination was as vivid as the clothes he liked to wear.

The Germans did not boast, indeed they talked but little. Yet they were determined and constant, and seldom failed in what they set their will to do.

In their home life, too, the Gauls and Germans had different customs. One of these was that the Gauls were served by slaves, whom they treated as they treated their beasts, while those who waited on the Germans sat round the hearths of their masters, and were treated as friends and comrades.

Three chief German tribes overran Gaul—the Visigoths, the Burgundians, and the Franks.

Julian, the Roman emperor, in 355 A.D. found that all his strength was needed to fight the Franks, who were the most powerful of the three German tribes. In spite of all he could do, however, northern Gaul was soon seized and held by these wild ambitious Germans.

The emperor therefore went himself to the north, and set up his court at Paris, or Lutetia, as this small village, built on a little island in the river Seine, was then called. He hoped by his presence to subdue the Franks.

But his hope was vain, and in 357 A.D. Lutetia itself, which Julian loved for its sea breezes and its vines and figs, was filled with Franks, and the emperor was forced to admit them to his court, and even to employ them in his army.

So great became the power of these persistent Franks, that in 387 A.D. Argobast, one of their chiefs, became Emperor of the West in all but name. The real emperor was Theodosius, but Argobast was powerful enough to put his own followers into every position of trust in the kingdom.

When Theodosius died, his successor Valentinian was determined to get rid of Argobast. He thought it would be a simple matter to depose the Frank, and himself handed

him a writ or paper, bidding him give up all claim to the imperial throne.

With true Frankish scorn for his enemy, Argobast tore up the writ, trampled it beneath his feet in the presence of Valentinian, and then went on his way as before.

When, a short time after this, Valentinian was strangled as he slept, Argobast put Eugenius, who had been a schoolmaster, on the emperor's seat. He himself took the highest position next to the emperor, being called a "Mayor of the Palace."

In 394 A.D. Argobast, who was a pagan, led the emperor's forces to battle against the Christians in Gaul.

Eugenius, who himself was on the battlefield, was killed and his army utterly defeated. Then Argobast, fearing that he might be captured and slain by the enemy, fell upon his sword and died.

In northern Gaul the Franks were now more powerful than the Romans. In the south the Visigoths and Burgundians, the other great German tribes, had made a home for themselves, and were living more or less peaceably among the Romans and Gauls. The country might therefore soon have been at peace, but in 450 A.D. a barbarous people called the Huns invaded the land. The Huns came from the east, where they had already laid waste country and town. They had no wish to conquer Gaul and settle in it. All they cared for was to conquer and destroy.

The Huns were led by their king, Attila, who was so cruel that he was named "The Scourge of God."

Against so dread a foe all the different tribes in Gaul united, being led by Theodoric, a Visigoth, and Aëtius, a Roman general. It was a conflict on which much depended, for should the Huns conquer Gaul they would attack Spain, Italy and finally rule over the whole western world.

Meanwhile, in the summer of 451 A.D., Attila besieged Orleans. The town was considered sacred in those days and was called Aureliacum.

For a time the city held out bravely, but at length the bishop sent a message to Aëtius, saying, "If thou be not here this very day, my son, it will be too late."

Yet still Aëtius did not come, and Orleans was forced to surrender. As the Huns began to plunder the city, however, loud shouts rent the air. Aëtius and Theodoric had come at last. They fell upon the Huns so fiercely that Attila was forced to retreat.

At length they reached the plains of Châlons-sur-Marne. Aëtius and Theodoric, who had followed, were now close behind. Attila ordered his men to halt. He was determined to fight and overthrow the bold Roman, the undaunted Visigoth, who had forced him to leave Orleans, his hardly won prize.

On the plains of Châlons-sur-Marne a terrible battle then began. All afternoon and evening the struggle lasted. Theodoric was slain, and when night came those who had fallen were too many to be numbered.

Aëtius and his followers were victorious. Attila, expecting that his camp would be attacked, made ready a great funeral-pyre on which he meant to die rather than be captured by the Romans and Franks. But Aëtius was worn out after the battle, and the Huns were free to retreat across the Rhine. Thus the country was saved from King Attila and his barbarous followers.

Gaul was now no longer a province of Rome. The German tribes had gradually taken possession of the country. Rome, indeed, had fallen on such evil days, that she soon ceased to have an emperor of her own. Even as her first emperor was a Romulus, so was her last, who in 476 A.D. was deposed. There was now no Emperor of the West, the Emperor of the East ruling supreme from the Bosphorus, until the year 800 A.D., when, as you shall hear, Charles the Great became the head of the Holy Roman Empire with the title "Emperor of Rome."

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST KING OF FRANCE

Among the Franks who had settled in northern Gaul, the Salian Franks were the strongest. The heads of the Salian Franks were called Merwings or Merovingians.

It is said that Meroveus, one of these Merwings, was a sea-king, and you will remember his name because the kings of his race were called after him the Merovingians.

Meroveus had long yellow hair reaching to his shoulders, so the kings of his line always wore their hair long. Indeed, one of the titles of the Frankish kings was "Long-Haired." By degrees these long locks became a sign of royalty; to have them shorn a token of disgrace.

Whether Meroveus was really a sea-king or not, his son Childeric was certainly king of the Salian Franks, and died in 481 A.D., leaving his son Clovis, a boy of fifteen, to succeed him.

Clovis might not have become king because he was Childeric's son, but the lad had already shown on the battlefield that he was strong and could be brave. The warriors of his tribe therefore chose him, by vote, to be their king. To let the people know on whom their choice had fallen they placed Clovis on their shields and carried him thus through their towns and villages.

At fifteen years of age the lad was king of only a small tribe of Salian Franks; by the time he was forty-five years of age he had won all Gaul for himself and his Frankish warriors.

The only Roman governor left in northern Gaul when

Clovis became king was Syagrius. He was rash enough to proclaim himself prince of the province of Soissons.

But the young king of the Franks would have no Roman, or, for the matter of that, no Frank either, ruling in opposition to him. He called his warriors together in 486 A.D. and declared war against Syagrius. Then shouting their fierce battle-cry, clashing their iron javelins upon their great white shields, the Franks set out to fight the Roman.

Syagrius did his utmost to defend his province, but neither skill nor strength was of any use before the furious onslaught of the Franks. The Roman governor was taken and secretly put to death, while Clovis established his capital at Soissons.

This success roused the ambition of Clovis. He sent his warriors out all over the country, bidding them lay waste those provinces that refused to own him as their lord.

In this way Gaul was gradually won for the king of the Franks, and the country which was ruled by the king of the Franks now, in 496 A.D., began to be known as France.

As the king's kingdom grew larger, his power also became greater. Before long it was plain that Clovis meant to use his power.

The king was a pagan, that is, he worshiped idols, as did also his followers. But, as you know, the Romans had brought the teaching of Christ to Gaul, and here and there churches had been built in which to worship Him. These churches were already rich and held many treasures.

Clovis, being a pagan, did not hesitate to enter the churches and seize their treasures, whenever there was an opportunity to do so.

There was a law among the Franks, that all the booty taken in war should be equally divided among the warriors, the king taking his share by lot, as did the others.

One day Clovis's warriors came to a town called Rheims. Here there was a church which contained, among other treasures, a beautiful vase. It was said to be "of marvelous size and beauty." The soldiers did not fear to add the vase to their booty.

The Bishop of Rheims had sent his good wishes to Clovis when he was chosen king, and Clovis had been pleased with the priest's kindness.

When the bishop heard that the church at Rheims had been sacked, and that the vase had been carried away, he sent a messenger to the king, begging that all the church's treasures might be sent back, but if that could not be, that at least the vase "of marvelous size and beauty" should be returned.

Clovis, pagan though he was, wished to please the bishop, and bade the messenger go with him to Soissons, where the booty was to be divided.

When they reached the capital, the plunder was piled up in a great heap, and round it stood the host commanded by the king.

Clovis, determined to please the bishop, stepped forward and said, "Valiant warriors, I pray thee not to refuse me, over and above my share, this vase," and he pointed to the one which the bishop valued so greatly.

The Franks, who were proud of their king because he led them always to victory, answered his appeal right royally.

"Glorious king," they cried, "everything we see here is thine, and we ourselves are submissive to thy command. Do thou as seemeth good to thee, for there is none that can resist thy power."

You can imagine how pleased Clovis was as he listened to the words of his brave warriors.

But among these warriors was one who thought it would be a fine thing to defy his king. He broke from the ranks and struck the beautiful vase with his battle-ax,

so that it was broken in half. Then pointing to the pile of booty, he shouted, "Thou shalt have naught of all this, O king, save what the lots shall truly give thee."

Clovis took no notice of the soldier's rudeness. It seemed as though he had not heard, for he took the broken vase and gave it to the bishop's messenger.

But punishment was yet to be meted out to the insolent soldier. Some months later, Clovis ordered his battle host to assemble, that he might, as was his custom, inspect their arms. All went well until the king came to the soldier who had struck the vase.

Before him the king lingered, looking at his lance, his sword, his battle-ax. Then stern and loud he spoke: "None hath brought hither arms so ill-kept as thine, nor lance, nor sword, nor battle-ax are fit for service"; and snatching the battle-ax from the soldier's hand, Clovis flung it to the ground.

As the warrior stooped to pick it up, the king seized his own battle-ax, swung it high above his head, and bringing it down upon the soldier's neck, said, "Thus diddest thou to the vase at Soissons."

Rough as the times were, the king's deed filled his warriors with fear.

Now as Clovis journeyed through his land, he heard of a beautiful princess named Clotilde. Clotilde was a Christian, yet Clovis, the worshiper of idols, determined to marry her.

The bishops and priests were pleased that Clovis should marry Clotilde. They thought that for the love he bore his wife the king would soon become a Christian, and the bishops wished the powerful young monarch to be on their side. When the priests told Clovis the story of Christ's death upon the Cross, he cried, "Had I and my Franks been there we would have avenged the wrong."

Clotilde also longed to see her husband give up his idols, and often she would plead with him to pray to the true

God. But the years passed, and still Clovis clung to his idols.

At length the queen had a little son. She begged Clovis to let their child be baptized by the Bishop of Rheims. Perhaps in her heart she hoped that Clovis would himself be baptized with his boy.

Ofttimes she said to the king, "The gods you worship are naught and can do naught for themselves or others: they are of wood or stone or metal."

Clovis loved Clotilde well, and although he was not yet willing to give up his gods, he could not refuse to let their little son be baptized as Clotilde wished. So the bishop came to the palace, and the child was baptized in the name of Christ.

The queen was glad, and looked more beautiful than ever in her joy. But in a little while her joy faded, for her little son grew ill and died.

To add to Clotilde's grief Clovis reproached her. In his pain he scarce knew what he said.

"Had the child been dedicated to my gods he would have been alive," he muttered. "He was baptized in the name of your God and could not live."

Clotilde answered gently, "I bear up against my sorrow, because I believe in the wisdom and goodness of the true God. Our little babe is with the whitest angels in heaven."

Then Clovis grew ashamed and silent before the patience of Clotilde. When another little son was born he also was baptized, and as he grew strong and lusty, Clovis began to think more kindly of Christ.

Now, soon after the birth of his second son, a fierce German tribe attacked the Franks. Clovis at once set out to punish the invaders. When he had said good-by to his wife she had begged him, once again, to give up his strange gods. But on the eve of battle how dare he forsake those who had often given him victory? So he had closed his heart against Clotilde's words.

In the midst of the battle Clovis saw that his soldiers were beginning to waver before the fury of the enemy.

At that moment one of his servants also saw that the battle was going against his master. Then he called out, so says an old chronicler, "My lord king, believe only on the Lord of Heaven, whom the queen my mistress preacheth."

Then in his despair Clovis raised his hands and prayed, "Christ Jesus, Thou whom my Queen Clotilde calleth the Son of the living God, I have invoked my own gods and they have withdrawn from me. . . . Thee, very God and Lord, I invoke; if Thou give me victory over these foes . . . I will believe on Thee and be baptized in Thy name."

Shouting his war-cry anew, Clovis once again led his men against the foe, and lo! the victory was his.

When Clotilde heard how the battle had been won, she was glad, but gladder still she grew as the day drew near on which her lord would be baptized.

From the palace to the church the royal procession walked when the great day dawned, the bishop leading the king by the hand as a little child. Following the king came the queen, more joyous than on her bridal morn, while behind her pressed the people. They, too, were going to be baptized with Clovis.

So great was the splendor prepared for the royal procession that, as he passed along the road from the palace to the church, the king said to the bishop, "Father, is not this itself that heaven which you have promised me?"

With Clovis were baptized three thousand of his warriors, as well as many women and children.

After his baptism the king went back to his wars, for he could not rest until he had brought all Gaul under his own rule. But now, when he went forth to battle, Clovis no longer invoked his old gods of wood and stone; instead, he prayed to one of the saints of the Christian Church.

Soon after he became a Christian, Clovis went to Paris. And there, in the city which the Emperor Julian had loved

for its sea breezes, its vines and figs, Clovis established his capital.

The work of the king was now nearly over. But before he died, Clovis confessed all the evil he had done, and knowing that he had often been cruel and unjust, he said that he had need of a "large pardon."

It was in the gray autumn days of the year 511 A.D. that King Clovis died at Paris, and was buried in a church which had been built by his wife Clotilde.

And you will remember that to Clovis belongs the glory of founding the kingdom of France, and of making it a Christian land.

CHAPTER V

THE THREE LITTLE PRINCES

AFTER the death of Clovis, northern France was divided among his four sons.

One of these died, leaving behind him three little boys, who lived with their grandmother Clotilde. The little princes loved their grandmother, and were as happy as three little boys could be.

One day a messenger came to Queen Clotilde from two of her sons, Clotair and Hildebert, saying, "Send thou the children to us that we may place them upon their father's throne."

Clotilde was pleased to do as her sons wished, for she thought she was too old to guard the children well. So, after making a little feast for the princes, she sent them away, never dreaming that any harm could befall them when they were in their uncle's care.

But no sooner had the children reached their uncles than the servants and tutors who had come with them were sent away, while they were shut up in a gloomy room all by themselves.

Then Clotair and Hildebert sent a messenger to Clotilde, bearing in his hands a pair of shears or scissors and a naked sword.

"Most glorious queen," said the messenger when he was shown into her presence, "thy sons and masters desire to know thy will touching these children. Wilt thou that they live with shorn hair or that they be put to death?" You remember that to cut off a prince's long locks was to

take from him the sign of his royal birth, when as a rule he entered the Church and became a priest.

Clotilde was so angry and dismayed at this strange message, that scarce knowing what she said, she cried, "If my grandsons are not placed upon their father's throne I would rather see them dead," and the poor queen wrung her hands and wept bitterly.

But the messenger hastened away, and although he knew that Clotilde had not really meant what she said, he told his master that the queen was pleased that the children should be put to death.

Clotair and Hildebert, the two cruel uncles, then sent for the little princes. The eldest, who was only ten years old, began to cry bitterly when he saw that his uncle Clotair held a hunting knife in his hand, but his voice was speedily silenced.

Then the second little prince, who was only seven years old, clung to his uncle Hildebert, begging that he might not be slain as his brother had been. For a moment it seemed as though Hildebert would try to save his little nephew.

But Clotair cried, "Thrust the child from thee, or thou diest in his stead." And Hildebert was afraid, and tried no more to shield his little nephew. Then he too was speedily put to death.

Amid the crowd of cruel men who looked on at Clotair's cruel deeds, one was struck with pity for the little prince who was left. He suddenly caught the child up in his arms and fled with him into the country.

When he was a few years older the prince was taken to church, where his locks were shorn, and in after-days he became a saint. When he became a saint he was named St. Cloud. To-day, close to Paris, on the banks of the Seine, there is a town called St. Cloud, after this little prince who became a saint.

Queen Clotilde wept bitterly when she heard of the

death of her two grandsons, and never did she forgive herself for the hasty words she had spoken.

But Clotair and Hildebert divided their nephews' kingdom, and paid no heed to their mother's tears.

Clovis, you remember, ruled as a king over the Franks, but Clotair was ruled by his warriors, for, many years after the death of the little princes, he refused to lead his people to battle, wishing rather to make peace with the Saxons, a German tribe which had come from the mouth of the Elbe, and was harrying the land.

But the Franks would have nothing to do with so cowardly a king, for such, in truth, they deemed him. They set a guard upon Clotair, tore his tent into pieces, and hurled scorn upon his fears. Then they carried him to the head of his army, saying that if he would not march upon the enemy they would kill him. So Clotair was forced to give battle. But the Saxons fought as men fight for home and country, slaying their foes in great numbers, until even the fierce Franks were themselves glad to sue for peace.

In 558 A.D. Hildebert died, and Clotair then ruled over all the Franks. From this time until his death in 561 he was engaged in wars with different tribes. At last he was stricken with fever, and as he tossed upon his couch he cried, "O how great must be the King of Heaven, if He can thus kill so mighty a king as I."

After Clotair's death the kingdom of the Franks was again divided into four parts. The kings who ruled during the next fifty years committed so many cruel deeds and did so little for their country, that there is nothing to tell you about them in this story. But during these years two queens lived, whose wicked lives have made their names well known in history.

Brunhilda and Fredegonda had each married a grandchild of King Clovis. From the first they hated and were jealous of one another.

When by chance Brunhilda fell into Fredegonda's power, the jealous queen sent her rival Brunhilda to prison, from which, however, she was rescued by a man who loved her. In vain did Fredegonda try again to capture her prisoner. Brunhilda had escaped beyond the reach of the angry queen.

In 584 A.D. it is said that Fredegonda murdered her husband. Many other crimes she certainly committed, but at length in 597 A.D. she died, leaving her son, Clotair II., to rule over part of the Frankish kingdom.

Brunhilda lived still for many years, and during these later years she grew more and more powerful. She also did much good, building churches, and giving alms to the poor. There were many of these who mourned for her after her death.

When she was eighty years of age, Brunhilda fell into the hands of Fredegonda's son, Clotair II., who was now king of all the Franks. Clotair was Brunhilda's enemy, for the old queen had been hated by his mother, and had also, when she was powerful, wrested many provinces from his kingdom. In 613 A.D. he ordered Brunhilda, whose age alone might have aroused his compassion, to be tied to the tail of a wild horse. In this cruel way the poor old queen was trampled to death.

In 628 A.D. Clotair II. died, and Dagobert, his son, at once seized the throne. The times were rough, yet the new king ruled so wisely that he was loved and obeyed by his people.

As he journeyed through his kingdom, he would stop at the towns and villages, that the people might come to tell him their troubles. And because the king was just, and punished the rich if they disobeyed his laws as well as the poor, the nobles did not dare to oppress their vassals so much as they had been used to do.

The king encouraged his people, too, to build churches and to adorn them with the work of skillful goldsmiths.

Because of his justice and his kindness the fame of Dagobert spread all over the land. While he lived his people called him "Great King Dagobert," and for many years after his death his name was remembered with reverence.

CHAPTER VI

THE SLUGGARD KINGS

CLOVIS, you will remember, was the first of the Merovingian monarchs. Dagobert was the last who was worthy to bear the name of king.

After the death of Dagobert twelve princes of his race ruled, but little is remembered of them save only their names.

They were weak and lazy, these Merovingian kings; indeed, they became so lazy that they were called the "Sluggard Kings," and sluggard is a name which no one, and least of all a king, should ever bear.

These sluggard or do-nothing kings sat upon the throne and pretended to rule.

If an ambassador from a distant land came to the court of France, he was brought into the king's presence to deliver his message. And the do-nothing king would seem to listen, but when he answered, the words he spoke were those that had been put into his mouth by his chief minister.

The chief minister of these Merovingian kings was called the Mayor of the Palace. At first these mayors were only stewards of high rank, but when they saw the weakness and laziness of the kings, then, little by little, they seized upon the power which was slipping from the hands of the listless race of Meroveus, and became the real rulers of the land.

You will be almost sorry for these kings, in spite of their foolish lazy ways, when you hear how they were treated by the Mayors of the Palace.

To begin with, the kings had no money, save a small

sum which was given to them by the mayor, and even the amount of that varied according to the minister's mood.

The kings owned no palaces, but were lodged in poorly furnished houses in the country, and there they held their dreary court, surrounded by a few roughly dressed servants.

When they wished to drive, no carriage was ordered for these make-believe kings. A cart drawn by a poke of oxen and guided by a cowherd was the only chariot they knew.

One of the most powerful of the mayors was named Pepin. Pepin was a duke, and although he never tried to change his title to king, he could easily have done so had he wished.

For twenty-seven years Duke Pepin ruled France. While a lazy, shadowy figure sat upon the throne and was called king, Pepin led the warriors forth to battle. And when the Pope, as the Bishop of Rome was now called, sent teachers or missionaries into France, it was Pepin who protected them from the fierce German tribes who were still wandering over the country.

As Christmastide drew near in the year 714 A.D. Pepin died. His son Charles now became Mayor of the Palace.

Charles seemed to think that the Franks could not be ruled unless a king was on the throne. He therefore saw to it that one of the sluggard kings should still sit there, for well he knew that such a king would not interfere with him.

A strong ruler was needed in France, for the country was threatened with a great danger. The Saracens or Arabs, followers of the Prophet Mahomet and enemies of the Cross, had spread all over the southern world.

In India they had taught their faith and put to death those who refused to accept it. In Spain, too, they had forced their faith upon the people, and in 718 A.D. possessed most of that country.

Then in 732 A.D. the Saracens determined to cross the

Pyrenees, the mountains that separated Spain from France. This was the great danger that threatened the country. And you will remember that Charles, in fighting against the Saracens, was fighting for the Christian faith as well as in defense of his country.

The Saracens, having crossed the Pyrenees, fell upon the town of Bordeaux and sacked it. They then crossed the river Garonne, and laid waste the province of Aquitaine.

The leader of the Saracens was named Abdel-Rahman. He had heard of the rich abbeys, filled with treasures, that were to be found in the city of Tours, and thither he now led his army. Already the Saracens were beneath the walls of the city, when they heard that the Franks were approaching in great numbers.

Abdel-Rahman ordered his troops to fall back on Poitiers, a town quite near to Tours, and there, for a week, the two armies faced one another. Then Abdel-Rahman's patience gave way, and at the head of his horsemen he ordered a general attack.

The Franks were already drawn up in battle array. "They stood there," says an old writer, "like solid walls or icebergs, and the Saracens were amazed to see how tall and strong the enemy seemed."

As the battle raged, a small body of Franks crept round to the Arabs' camp, perhaps in the hope of robbing it, or, it may be, wishing to attack the enemy in the rear.

The Saracens had much booty in their camp, and Abdel-Rahman's horsemen seeing the Franks, as they believed, falling upon it, at once left their post to defend their treasure. But they fell into disorder, broke their ranks, and soon the whole army was in confusion. Meanwhile the main body of the Franks, shouting their war-cry, clashing their shields, pressed in among them and beat them down, slaying Abdel-Rahman, their leader.

Night fell, and both armies withdrew to their tents. The Franks were early astir, eager to finish the fight. But

in the camp of the Saracens all was strangely still. A few Franks were sent to find out what the enemy was about. They entered the camp unhindered. In the tents not a soldier was to be seen, for under cover of the darkness the Saracens had beat a retreat, leaving their booty behind them.

The battle of Tours or Poitiers, for it is called by either name, was a very important battle, for by the victory of the Franks, not only France, but Europe was saved from becoming the home of the fierce followers of Mahomet the Prophet.

It was because of the heavy blows that Duke Charles showered upon the Saracens at the battle of Tours, that he was from henceforth called Charles Martel, or, as the word Martel means hammer, Charles the Hammer. After the battle of Poitiers in 731 A.D., Charles did not rest until he had swept the Saracens utterly out of France.

To reward his warriors for their valor on the battlefield, Charles the Hammer robbed the churches of their treasures; he even made some of his soldiers bishops and priests. This made the Pope very angry. But it was in vain that he rebuked Charles. Charles was all-powerful and would have his own way.

The Pope's anger did not make the duke cease to protect the missionaries who were sent from Rome to teach the German tribes the faith of Christ.

One of these missionaries was St. Boniface. You will remember his name with interest when I tell you that he was born in Wessex, which was once the name of the south-west of England.

Charles wrote a letter and sent it, not only to the bishops, but to all those dukes and counts who had power in the land, to tell them that St. Boniface was under his care.

St. Boniface was grateful for Charles's protection, and from the heart of Germany, where he was working among

the fierce pagan people, he wrote a grateful tribute to the powerful duke.

"Without the patronage of the Prince of the Franks," said St. Boniface, "without his order and the fear of his power, I could not guide this people, or defend the priests . . . and handmaids of God, or forbid in this country the rites of the pagans and their worship of idols."

In 737 A.D. the Merovingian king whom Charles had placed upon the throne died, and during the last few years of his life Charles the Hammer ruled without a shadowy sluggard king sitting upon the throne.

Charles himself died at the age of fifty-two, and his brave warriors wept because he would lead them forth to battle no more.

CHAPTER VII

THE DEATH OF ST. BONIFACE

BEFORE he died, Charles the Hammer divided the kingdom between his two sons, Pepin and Carloman.

Charles had trained his sons to love their country better than themselves, and they worked together for the good of their people, undisturbed by a single jealous thought.

But at the end of six years Carloman grew tired of his share of the task. Knowing that Pepin was able to rule alone, he had his royal locks shorn and entered a monastery, where he was heard of no more.

Pepin was a little man, so his people called him Pepin the Short. But though he was little he had the great gift of courage, and in spite of his small body he was unusually strong.

It is said that soon after his father's death he gave proof of his great strength. The Franks were one day gathered in great numbers round an arena or open space, to watch a cruel combat between two savage beasts. It was their chief amusement to watch such sport, and Duke Pepin was among the spectators.

A lion had just sprung upon a bull and brought it to the ground, when Pepin rose to his feet, and, pointing to the beasts, cried aloud to the Franks, "Which of you will dare to separate them?"

No one answered the terrible challenge. Then Pepin himself sprang into the arena, and fought both the lion and the bull.

The Franks looked on in horror, expecting every moment that Pepin would be torn to pieces. But he overpowered both the savage beasts, and then, tossing away his sword, he cried, "Am I worthy to be your king?" And the rough warriors, to whom kingship meant little save such bravery and strength as Pepin had just shown, shouted aloud that he was worthy.

For ten years Pepin the Short ruled as Mayor of the Palace, the last of the sluggard kings still sitting on the throne where Pepin himself had placed him after the death of Charles the Hammer.

But at the end of ten years Pepin began to think that there was no reason why he should not be king in name as well as in deed.

So he sent to the Pope, who in those days had power over kings, to ask if he, Pepin, might be crowned.

"It is right that the kingly title should rest where the kingly power now is," answered the Pope; and as there was no doubt that Pepin had the "kingly power," the question was settled.

The sluggard king was therefore deposed, his long hair cut off, and he himself shut up in a monastery. And thus ended the race of the Merovingian kings.

Pepin, the new king, was then anointed by St. Boniface, in the presence of his clergy and warriors, with holy oil, which was believed to have come straight from heaven. With Pepin began a new race of kings, called after its founder, Charles the Hammer, the Carlovingian line.

Two years after this Pepin was again anointed with holy oil by the Pope himself, and along with him were consecrated his two sons. One of these sons became the famous Emperor Charlemagne or Charles the Great.

You remember that Charles the Hammer had taken St. Boniface under his protection. Pepin the Short continued to care for the good man, but his power could not save the missionary from a martyr's death.

But before I tell you of the fate which befell the saint, listen to this beautiful story about the holy man.

Once upon a time, in his journeys, the saint came to a land where the rude Northmen still worshiped a god called Thor the Hammerer.

It was winter, and on a little hill a great crowd of warriors clad in white, of women and children, gathered around a fire that had been lighted near the foot of an altar.

Close to the altar was a tall and ancient oak tree, sacred to the god named Thor.

In the midst of the crowd stood the high priest, and at his feet knelt a little child. The little child was the offering of the people to their god. He was doomed to die by a hammer-stroke, that Thor the Hammerer might be pleased.

But ere the hammer fell this wintry night, a quick step came hurrying up the little hill, and Boniface the saint, pushing the people on one side, reached the high priest and the little kneeling child.

Very simply the stranger told the people the story of Jesus and the Cross, and before the tale was ended the hammer had fallen from the hand of the high priest, had fallen harmless to the ground. The little child was saved.

Then seizing the hammer, St. Boniface himself felled the sacred oak, and even as he did so, his eyes fell upon a young fir tree, standing straight and green before him.

"Here is the living tree," he cried, "with no stain of blood upon it, which shall be the sign of your new worship. See, it is pointing to the sky! Let us call it the tree of the Christ Child. Take it up and carry it to the hall of your chief, for this is the birth-night of the White Christ. You shall no more keep your feasts in the shades of the forest with secret and cruel rites. You shall keep them in your own homes, with happy laughter and glad songs of glee."

Such, says the legend, was the beginning of the Christmas tree, which boys and girls all over the world have learned to love.

Boniface had been made an archbishop, and had he wished, he might have lived at ease in his palace for the rest of his life. But though he was an old man now, Boniface longed to carry his Master's message to the fierce German tribes which had never even heard of Christ.

So making one of his disciples archbishop in his stead, the old man said, "As for me, I will put myself on my road, for the time of my passing away approacheth. I have longed for this departure and none can turn me from it." It almost seemed that Boniface foresaw what might happen. With only a few followers he set out to find the people whom he wished to teach. When at length he reached their haunts he halted, and his servants put up their master's tent. Then in that wild and lonely place he sat down with his followers to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

But a band of savages had seen the white tent, and in their foolish rage they rushed upon the little company. The saint's servants were brave men, and placing their master in their midst, they prepared to defend him unto death.

"Hold, hold!" cried the old man, as he saw them draw their swords; "we should return good for evil, and trust in God"; and then he bade them put their swords back in their sheaths, and strike no blow at the savages whom they had come to teach.

But the barbarians, undaunted by the gentleness of the old man, slew him and as many of his followers as they could seize. Thus perished the holy man of God, St. Boniface.

King Pepin's great work was to help the Pope against the King of the Lombards. To do this he crossed the Alps with his army and marched into Italy.

After a great battle, in which he was victorious, Pepin shut up the King of Lombardy and the soldiers that had been taken prisoners, in a town called Pavia, and made the

king promise to stay within the gates of the city. Then with much booty Pepin set off on his homeward march.

But the Pope was not satisfied. He was sure that his enemy would break his word and escape from Pavia, and he wished Pepin had stayed in Italy instead of hastening back to France.

And, indeed, no sooner was Pepin out of the country than the Lombards, more fierce than ever after their defeat, escaped from Pavia, laid waste the country, and began to thunder at the very gates of Rome.

Then a strange thought came to the Pope. It was certain that Pepin would not come back again even at the Pope's request, but if the King of France received a letter from the Apostle Peter, promising to reward him if he helped the Pope, why then without doubt Pepin would come back to Italy.

So the Pope sat down, and while the Lombards thundered at his gates, he wrote a letter from "Peter, Apostle of Jesus Christ," to Pepin and his warriors, to tell them that "if they came in haste to help the Pope, he, Peter, would aid them as if he were alive, and that they would conquer their enemies as well as win eternal life."

As the Pope had foreseen when he wrote that strange letter, Pepin, when he read it, did not hesitate to return to Italy. Once again he crossed the Alps, and once again he conquered the Lombards and shut them up in Pavia, and this time, anxious for peace at any price, the King of Lombardy kept the terms imposed upon him by Pepin.

When the battle was over, Pepin sent for the keys of the towns which he had taken from the Lombards, and these he sent to Rome to be laid on the altar of the church of St. Peter. In reality, to give the keys to St. Peter's was to give the towns to which they belonged to the Pope.

This gift was known as the "Donation of Pepin." It was no strange thing for kings in those days to offer their victories to God. But you will remember Pepin's gift to

St. Peter's because it was the beginning of the worldly possessions of the popes.

Soon after this, as King Pepin was returning home from battle, he was attacked by fever. His servants carried him to St. Denis, where he died, having ruled France for sixteen years.

CHAPTER VIII

ROLAND WINDS HIS HORN

BEFORE his death Pepin had divided his kingdom between his two sons, but in three years Carloman died. Charles, soon to be called Charlemagne or Charles the Great, ruled alone as King of the Franks.

As his father had done, so Charlemagne also marched into Italy with his brave warriors and punished the Lombards, who had again dared to besiege the city of Rome.

At home, too, the king had little peace, for again and again the Saxons invaded his land. The great king conquered them, and for a time they would live quietly and be obedient to their conqueror. But as soon as he went away to fight in distant lands they rebelled, and for thirty years Charlemagne waged war against them.

When Charlemagne had conquered one of these tribes, he would offer to pardon them if they would give up their false gods and be baptized. If they refused to be baptized, their heads were cut off.

As you can imagine, many Saxon tribes were willing to be baptized rather than to suffer death. After their baptism, Charlemagne would send missionaries to the people, and thus little by little the teaching of the White Christ became better known.

Around the name of this great King Charles, as around the name of our own King Arthur, have gathered many legends or marvelous tales. These tales may not all be true, for legends are woven out of fancy as well as fact. But sometimes legends help us to understand a man or

woman, a country or an age, better than we should if fancy had been idle and left facts untouched.

And so, although part of the story of the battle of Roncesvalles, in which Roland, Charlemagne's nephew, fought so bravely, is not told to us in history but only in legend, yet it is none the less worthy to be read.

The great battle of which I wish to tell you took place in the valley of Roncesvalles.

Spain, as you have already heard, had been conquered by the Saracens, those fierce followers of the Prophet Mahomet. But they began to quarrel and fight among themselves, and at last their King, Marsil, begged Charlemagne to come and help him against his own rebellious people, who were trying to wrest from him the beautiful city of Saragossa.

Charlemagne did not need to be asked twice. To him it was enough that those he was asked to fight were infidels, followers of Mahomet and not of Christ. He would destroy these fierce Saracens, or baptize them as he had baptized the pagan Saxons at home.

So, to the joy of the King of Saragossa, Charlemagne set out for Spain at the head of his brave Frankish warriors.

To reach Saragossa the king had to lead his army through the valley of Roncesvalles. The valley was really a narrow pass through which the army could march only in a long thin line. Should an enemy steal down the mountains and fall upon the soldiers as they struggled along the narrow pass, nothing could save them. But no foe was in ambush, and the great army passed in safety out of the valley of Roncesvalles.

But when Charlemagne had laid siege to Saragossa his difficulties began, for at once the Saracens stopped fighting among themselves, to fight together against the foe who had besieged their city. Marsil, too, proved false, for he slew the ambassadors of the French king, although he had sent them the olive branch of peace. He had indeed no need of Charlemagne now that the Saracens had ceased

to fight against him, and would gladly have seen Charlemagne and his army return to their own land.

Meanwhile in the French camp provisions ran short and sickness broke out among the soldiers. Tidings also came from France telling of new invasions by the Saxons. So when Marsil sent to beseech Charlemagne to raise the siege and make peace with him, the king was more pleased than the Saracens knew.

Now in history we hear little of Charlemagne's return to France. But in a poem called "The Song of Roland," which was loved by the Franks and often sung by them as they marched to battle, the sad tale has been told. And if the story of the treachery of King Marsil and all that befell Roland and his friend Oliver in the valley of Roncesvalles is partly legend, it is, as I have told you, not the less worthy to be heard.

King Marsil had promised that if Charlemagne would go back to his fair realm of France, he would become his vassal and be baptized in the name of the Holy Christ.

Charlemagne did not know if he could trust the heathen lord, so he called together a council of war, and told his barons and knights King Marsil's words. "Yet whether he spoke the truth or falsehood I know not," said Charlemagne.

Then up sprang Roland, Charlemagne's own nephew, and the bravest knight of France, crying, "Trust not this traitor Marsil. He sent thee the olive branch of peace, yet he slew thine ambassador. Let us fight, nor heed the false words of the traitor king."

As Roland ceased speaking, Ganelon, his stepfather, rose, and an angry scowl was upon his face, for he hated Roland, although others loved him well.

"Heed not the brave words of my stepson Roland," he said. "Accept King Marsil's promises, lest we tarry here and are slain."

Still Charlemagne sat silent, waiting, lest other knights had aught to say.

Then the wisest man in the king's council arose. "The words of Ganelon are full of wisdom," he said. "Let us make peace with King Marsil and return to our own land."

"As thou sayest so shall it be," answered Charlemagne, and he commanded Ganelon to go tell Marsil that Charlemagne would accept his homage and look for him to come to the fair realm of France to be baptized in the name of Christ.

Ganelon was ill-pleased to be sent to the King of Saragossa, lest he should prove false and slay him even as he had already slain other ambassadors. And because he was angry, he vowed to bring shame upon Charlemagne and Roland, whom he hated.

Thus before Ganelon had spoken long with King Marsil he had won for himself rich gifts, but he had betrayed Charlemagne and offered up Roland to death, as you shall hear.

When the ambassador returned to the French camp, he told Charlemagne that he might well trust King Marsil to do all that he had promised.

Charlemagne was filled with foreboding, he knew not why. Yet he ordered the trumpets to sound and the great army to prepare to start on its homeward journey.

But all unknown to the Franks, silent and still, there stole after them, through the forests and along the mountain tops, the hosts of King Marsil. For thus had it been planned by the traitor Ganelon.

As they drew near to the valley of Roncesvalles, Charlemagne ordered his army to halt. His distrust of King Marsil was not allayed. "Were the enemy to prove false," he said to his lords, "it would go ill with us as we march through this pass. Who will guard the entrance to the valley while we march onward?"

"Entrust the rearguard to Roland," said Ganelon quickly, "for who is so brave a knight as he." But in his

heart Ganelon laughed, for well he knew that the hosts of Marsil would fall upon Roland and his knights, and slay them before Charlemagne was aware.

The king looked with displeasure at Ganelon. Yet it was foolish to dream that one of his own knights would betray the army. So, as Roland also pleaded that the post of danger might be given to him, Charlemagne yielded at last, saying, "Half of the army shall I leave with thee to guard the pass."

"Nay," said Roland, "twenty thousand men only will I have." And Ganelon, as he heard his stepson's words, was well pleased.

Then the great army passed on, leaving Roland to guard the entrance to the valley of Roncesvalles. With him were his friend Oliver, the bold Archbishop Turpin, the twelve chosen peers of France, and twenty thousand of Charlemagne's bravest knights.

Among the army there were many who would fain have stayed with Roland. But sadder than any of his soldiers was the great king himself. Fear was in his heart, tears in his eyes, for ever his heart whispered to him that Roland was betrayed. Yet, saying farewell to his dauntless rear-guard, Charlemagne marched on at the head of his army.

Roland and his knights were now left alone, and the great host of the Saracens was drawing near. Soon Roland could hear the tramp of armed men.

Then Oliver, his friend, climbed out of the valley on to the top of a hill, and lo! he saw a great host approaching, and he knew that Roland was betrayed, and by the false traitor Ganelon.

Down again to the valley ran Oliver and told Roland what he had seen.

"Wind a loud blast upon thy horn," cried Oliver. "Our king will hear and hasten back to our aid." For ever round his neck the knight wore an ivory horn. It had a note of magic, and if Roland blew it in time of need the

sound was carried on and ever on. Neither lofty mountains nor dense forests could dull the sweet clear tone of Roland's magic horn.

"Blow thy horn," cried Oliver, but alas, this Roland would not do.

And now with mocking words the heathen host rushed upon the hero and his twenty thousand knights.

"Ye are sold, sold and betrayed by your king," they shouted.

Roland heard the base lie, and furiously he rode against the foe, striking fierce blows with his good sword Durindal.

Listen to the "Song of Roland" as it tells how Roland looked that day:

> "Oh in his harness he looks grand;
> On, on he goes with lance on high,
> Its tip is pointed to the sky;
> It bears a snow-white pennon, and
> Its golden fringes sweep his hand."

Oliver and the brave Archbishop Turpin fought as they had never fought before, as did also the knights, until King Marsil's host lay slain upon the ground.

Four hundred thousand strong had been the heathen hosts, and but one was left to tell King Marsil the dread tidings that his army had perished.

When Marsil heard that Roland was still alive and that all his hosts were slain, his rage was terrible.

Without a moment's delay he assembled another great army, and himself marched at its head toward the valley of Roncesvalles.

As he drew near to the battlefield, he divided his army. Sending one division to fight the Franks, he kept the other back on the hillside to watch how the battle went.

Then, when Roland saw another force approaching, he rallied his knights to a fresh attack, and so valiantly did

they fight, that erelong the heathen host fled, calling upon Marsil for help.

There were now but three hundred of Charlemagne's peerless warriors on the battlefield. The others were dead or wounded. But the handful of gallant knights never flinched as King Marsil himself advanced upon them with his men. And ever in the forefront of the battle rode Roland, and by his side was Oliver.

At length, when but sixty Franks were left, Archbishop Turpin besought Roland to sound his horn, that Charlemagne might hear and come back to avenge the death of so many of his peerless knights.

Then Roland, thinking it now no shame to wind his horn, did as the good archbishop wished. And far away a note, clear but faint, fell upon the ear of Charlemagne.

"It is the ivory horn I hear," he cried. "Roland hath need of us."

But Ganelon was by the king's side, and he laughed, saying, "It is but the wind that my lord hears, as it whistles among the trees."

So Charlemagne, for all that he was ill at ease, rode on.

Once again Roland placed the horn to his lips, but he was faint from many wounds, and the note he blew was sad and low. Yet on and on it journeyed, until far away the great king heard the mournful sound.

"Roland hath need of us," he cried, as the sound crept into his heart. "There hath surely been a battle." Yet, for Ganelon still mocked at the king's fears, Charlemagne moved on toward France, but now he rode more slowly.

Once more Roland blew his ivory horn, but he was weak from loss of blood, and it was a sad sweet note that reached the king.

Charlemagne's knights heard the note also, and cried, "It is Roland who calls us, for his need is great. He has been betrayed," and they looked darkly at the traitor Ganelon.

Then Charlemagne hesitated no longer. He ordered his army to turn and march back to the valley of Roncesvalles. And because the soldiers loved Roland well, each one put spurs to his horse and rode in haste to his comrade's aid.

As for Ganelon, the king gave him into the charge of the kitchen knaves, who beat him and called him traitor and false knight.

For it was indeed Ganelon who had said to Marsil, "If you kill Roland, there will be no one left to be your enemy. For Charlemagne grows old, and there is no knight so bold as Roland." He had promised that Roland and no other should be left at Roncesvalles, and that but a few knights should stay with him. And for this treachery he had received rich gifts from King Marsil. Well might the kitchen knaves call Ganelon traitor and false knight.

On the battlefield at Roncesvalles there were now left alive only Roland, the brave priest Turpin, and a noble count. Oliver had perished with the other knights.

The heathen host was still more than a thousand strong, yet so bravely did the three warriors stand that they dared not attack them. Only from afar they hurled their javelins at the dauntless three, until, pierced by a dart, the count fell dead.

Roland too was sore wounded, but yet again he blew his ivory horn. Faint and dull the notes were wafted on the breeze, faint and dull they fell upon the ear of Charlemagne.

"Let my trumpets sound," cried the king, "that Roland may know we come. Sore wounded must he be, or not thus would he wind his horn."

Then loud sounded the trumpets of the Franks, and the heathen host heard the blast, and knowing that the great king was coming to avenge the death of his knights, they fled, hurling their spears at the two heroes who alone were left on the battlefield.

One of the spears struck the good archbishop, and he fell to the ground. Roland only was left alive.

But he too was nigh to death. With one last effort he placed his good sword Durindal and his ivory horn beneath his body, that there Charlemagne might find them when he came.

"Then not unmindful of His care,
Once more he sues to God for grace.
'O Thou true Father of us all . . .
From all the perils I deserve
For sinful life, my soul preserve.'

"Then to his God out stretcheth he
The glove from his right hand—and see!
St. Gabriel taketh it instantly.
God sends a cherub—angel bright,
And Michael, Saint of Peril hight—
And Gabriel comes; up, up they rise,
And bear the Count to Paradise."

God had Roland's soul safe in Paradise, but his body lay quiet and still on the battlefield, and there Charlemagne found it, with the sword and magic horn beneath.

Sorely did the great king grieve for Roland and his peerless knights, yet did he not tarry on the battlefield to weep. But at the head of his army he followed the heathen host, nor did he order the trumpets to sound the retreat until every one of the vast army was slain.

Ganelon, the traitor, suffered a terrible death, for by the order of Charlemagne and the judgment of the knights of France, he was torn to pieces by wild horses.

During his long reign Charlemagne had often helped the Pope against his enemies.

When Leo III. became Pope, he was glad to have the great king as his friend, and in 799 A.D., when the Romans rebelled against him, Leo fled to Charlemagne for help.

The king agreed to punish the Pope's enemies, and send him back in safety to Rome. Perhaps it was in gratitude

that Leo III. then agreed to crown Charlemagne Emperor of the West.

You remember that Romulus, the last emperor, had been deposed in 476 A.D., and since then there had been no Emperor of the West.

But now, on Christmas Day, in the year 800 A.D., Charlemagne, who had journeyed to Rome, went into the great church of St. Peter's. As he kneeled before the altar the Pope placed a crown upon his head, while all the people who had crowded into the church shouted, "Long life and victory to Charles, Emperor of the Romans!"

It was an empty title, for the Romans had now no power and no position in the world.

But the Pope having bestowed the title upon Charlemagne, he henceforth ruled over his great kingdom as emperor.

All Gaul from the Rhine to the Pyrenees was his; also, for the most part, Italy and all central and western Germany belonged to him, while many races, scattered over the world, owned their allegiance to the Emperor Charlemagne.

For fourteen years there was now peace in France, and during these years the emperor worked as hard as he had done in time of war.

You will be surprised to hear that though he was an old man now, he was so anxious to learn that he studied harder than any schoolboy. Astronomy, arithmetic, grammar, and music, these were some of the studies that were dear to the emperor. But he had never learned to write, and that was Charlemagne's great ambition. So he was often to be seen walking about with tablets in his hand, and at every odd moment he would practice making letters. But he never knew them well enough to do more than sign his name.

The emperor was anxious that the boys and girls in his land should learn the things which he had never been taught when he was young, so he built schools and sent

scholars to teach in them. But there were lazy pupils then just as there are lazy pupils now, and when the emperor visited the schools, he would tell the lazy boys and girls how sorry they would be if they grew up, as he had done, without even knowing how to write. And then the boys and girls would do their lessons better, until they forgot the emperor's words, and began to grow lazy once more.

The great emperor was old now, and his long reign was nearly over. He was more than seventy years of age when he grew ill and died.

His people buried him near to his favorite hunting ground. Upon his knees they placed an open Bible, on which rested the little purse filled with alms which he had carried with him to Rome. Upon his head they left his crown, his good sword lying by his side, while at his feet rested his shield and the scepter he had wielded so wisely and so well.

CHAPTER IX

LOUIS THE GOOD-NATURED

THE new king had begun to reign over one of his father's provinces when he was a little child of three years old. At least, if he did not reign, he had really been anointed with holy oil just as a grown-up king would have been.

After he had been anointed, the little boy was carried in his cradle to the entrance of his kingdom. Here his courtiers halted. They did not wish their baby-king to enter his dominions in a cradle. So they clad the little king in a tiny suit of armor and gave him tiny arms, that looked more like toys than weapons. Then these gallant courtiers brought a horse and put his little Highness on its back and held him there, safe and sound and perhaps crowing with delight, until he had entered his royal province amid the cheers of the people.

But that was long ago, when Charlemagne's strong arm could reach to the kingdom of his little son and keep order and peace for him during his boyhood's days. After his father's long reign was ended, it was this same son, grown now to be a man, who ruled over Charlemagne's great empire.

Louis was not strong and wise as his father had been. He was indeed so gentle and so easily pleased, that his people called him Louis the Good-natured.

King Louis had been taught by priests when he was a little boy, and when he grew older he followed their teaching better than they did themselves. He determined that

when he was king, the priests should live more simply than they had done in his father's time.

The priests had arms, for in those days they were to be seen on the battlefield as well as in the church. But King Louis bade them lay down their arms. They must not fight with swords and spears as other men, but with gentleness and kindly words and deeds.

The priests had horses, for in those days they rode on as noble war-steeds as did the bravest knights. But King Louis bade them put away their horses. It was not meet for them to ride on noble steeds, for their Master was lowly and had ridden on an ass.

Many of the monks were greedy and selfish, and had used their power to wring money from the people. Louis cared for the poor and forbade the monks to oppress them.

You can imagine, then, that King Louis was no favorite with the bishops and priests, but if they were displeased, the people were loud in their praise of Louis the Good-natured.

Now King Louis had four sons, and as they grew up they were quick to take advantage of their father's good-nature. Again and again they rebelled against him. At last even Louis was roused, and took away from Pippin, the most troublesome of his sons, the province over which he ruled, and gave it to his youngest son, Charles the Bald.

The three eldest sons then assembled an army to fight against their father. The king also gathered his soldiers together, but when the two armies met on a field called the Field of Red, many of King Louis's soldiers left him and joined themselves to the rebels. For this reason the battle-field was ever after called "The Field of Falsehood."

Louis, when he saw that he was left with only a few followers, bade them also go away, for he was unwilling that any one should "lose life or limb" for his sake. Then he surrendered himself to his sons, who treated him very

badly, for they forced him to confess in church, before his people, a long list of crimes which he had never committed.

King Louis's good-nature had turned into weakness, and he obediently read aloud the list of crimes of which he was guiltless. Then, laying aside his royal robes, he allowed himself to be clad in sackcloth, and walked barefooted through the streets of the city, no longer a king but a prisoner.

But now that they had got their father out of the way, the four sons quarreled so fiercely among themselves, that their subjects grew discontented, and began to wish that Louis the Good-natured was still upon the throne. And at length they actually revolted, and set Louis free and made him king once more.

You would expect Louis to punish his sons for their bad behavior, but he never seemed to dream of such a thing. So, when the chance came, they again took up arms against their father. King Louis was ill and worn out with the troubles of his reign, yet he went at the head of his army to put down the rebellion, and this time his sons were forced to submit to him.

But the effort had been too much for the king. He took fever and died on a little island in the river Rhine.

His last words were words of forgiveness to the son who was named after him. "I forgive my son," he said, "but let him remember that he has brought his father's gray hairs in sorrow to the grave."

CHAPTER X

THE VIKINGS

CHARLES the Bald began to reign in 843 A.D. At first his eldest brother laid plots against him, as he had done against their father, to take his kingdom away.

But Charles the Bald made friends with his brother Louis, and together they fought at Fontanet in 841 A.D. against their cruel and ambitious eldest brother.

It was a terrible battle, lasting from dawn until mid-day, when Charles and Louis were victorious. But so many soldiers had been slain that all over France there were sad and empty homes.

"Accursed be this day," wrote one of the officers who fought at the battle of Fontanet:

> "Be it unlit by the light of the sun,
> Be it without either dawn or twilight . . .
> Eye ne'er hath seen more fearful slaughter . . .
> The linen vestments of the dead did whiten the field
> Even as it is whitened by the birds of Autumn."

Two years after the battle of Fontanet the brothers agreed to fight no more, but to divide the great kingdom between them. Accordingly, at the Treaty of Verdun in 843 A.D., Charles received the kingdom of France, Louis Germany, while to Lothair was given Italy and the name of Emperor.

After this battle Charles the Bald was really King of France, but he had not much power except in the city of Paris; for the lords and barons were kings on their own lands, and were used to make their own laws and impose

taxes on their people. Indeed, there was no limit to their power.

The king gave lands and castles to the barons on what was called the feudal system.

The feudal system meant that the barons became vassals to the king. They were bound to do homage to him for their lands and to fight for him in time of war.

In the same way the barons gave portions of their land to the people who became their vassals, and in time of war had to follow their lord to the battlefield, even as the lords followed the king.

When they were not fighting, the barons were hunting or feasting. They never dreamed of working, that was fit only for the serfs or slaves, who were bought or sold with the land as though they were tools.

These slaves were badly clothed and badly fed. Often, when the harvest was poor, they were starved. Yet the barons still feasted in their halls, heedless of the hunger and misery of the people who were huddled together in the huts that stood at their very doors.

After Charles the Bald had conquered his eldest brother at the battle of Fontanet, his greatest troubles were caused by the Vikings or Northmen.

Even in the time of Charlemagne these wild sea-rovers had reached the coast of France, only however to set their sails, and disappear as suddenly as they had come, when they heard that the great emperor was near. For Charlemagne was the only name the Northmen feared.

Charlemagne himself had foreseen what would happen when he was no longer alive to guard his kingdom from these fierce Vikings.

As he sat at dinner one day in a seaport town, the emperor saw vessels at anchor in the harbor.

"These are trading vessels," cried his lords, "from Africa, from Britain, or elsewhere."

"Nay," answered Charlemagne, "these vessels be not laden with merchandise, but manned with cruel foes."

Then getting up from the table, he went to the window and watched the red sails of the Northmen's ships as they took to flight.

Tears fell from the emperor's eyes as he turned to his followers. "Know ye, my lieges, why I weep so bitterly," he asked. "Of a surety, I fear not lest these fellows should succeed in injuring me by their miserable piracies; but it grieveth me deeply that whilst I live they should have been nigh enough to touch at this shore. I am a prey to violent sorrow when I foresee what evils they will heap upon my descendants and their people."

In the reign of Louis the Good-natured, what Charlemagne had foreseen came to pass.

The terrible Northmen from Norway, Denmark, and Sweden descended upon the coast of France, and laid waste all the towns and villages to which they came. In the time of Charles the Bald the red sails of the Viking ships were known and feared not only in France, but all over Europe.

More than once, in this reign, the Vikings reached Paris, and the citizens, fearing lest their homes and churches should be plundered and destroyed, offered the Northmen large sums of money if they would but sail away and leave their homes and sanctuaries unharmed.

This, as you can easily believe, made the Vikings return again and again, in the hope of being paid a heavy ransom to depart.

These fierce sea-rovers had no respect for church or priest.

Hasting was the name of one of the chief leaders of the Northmen. Wonderful tales were told of this man, of his cruelty and his craft, so that when he actually landed on the coast of France the people were full of fear.

This is one of the stories that the French folk had heard of Hasting.

It was not often that this chief found a town too strongly guarded to be taken by his rough followers. But once upon a time, finding he could not take a certain city by assault, he determined to enter it by craft, or, as you would say, by a trick.

He sent to the bishop of the town, saying that he was very ill and wished to be baptized in the name of the Holy Christ.

The bishop, pleased with such a wish from a Viking chief, hastened to baptize Hasting as he desired.

Soon after this his comrades spread the tidings that their chief was dead. They then went to the bishop, and begged that he might be buried as a Christian, and have a solemn service held over his coffin.

To this also the bishop willingly agreed, and the coffin of the great Viking was carried into church, followed closely by a band of Northmen.

Picture the good bishop's dismay when, in the middle of the service, Hasting, strong and fierce as ever, suddenly leaped from his coffin, sword in hand. His followers at once drew their swords from beneath their cloaks and closed the church doors.

Then the kind bishop and all the priests who were present at the service were slain. The band of robbers seized the rich treasures of the sanctuary, and escaped to their ships and sailed away before the horrified citizens, who had also come to the burial service of the Viking chief, had found time or courage to stop them.

After hearing such a tale, it was little wonder that the French dreaded this Viking chief.

When Hasting arrived at Paris, Charles the Bald sent the Abbot of St. Denis, "the which was an exceeding wise man," to talk with the Viking. This worthy abbot, after promising Hasting large sums of money, actually succeeded

in persuading him to give up his roving life and to become a Christian.

Charles the Bald thereupon made him a count, and gave him gifts of land and castles, and for many years the Viking chief kept faith with the kings of France.

Soon after this Charles the Bald was in Italy, and as he was crossing the Alps on his way home he was taken ill. His servants could find no shelter on the mountains for the king, save in a comfortless hut, and there Charles the Bald died, at the age of fifty-four.

His son Louis the Stammerer, who succeeded him, was a delicate prince who reigned only about a year. He was followed by his brother Carloman, of whom there is nothing to tell, save that after reigning for two years he was gored to death by a boar as he was hunting in the royal forests.

CHAPTER XI

THE VIKINGS BESIEGE PARIS

THE names given by the French to their kings in these olden days were sometimes strangely undignified, as you will agree when I tell you that the next king to reign was Charles the Fat.

Charles was indeed of an enormous size, and unfortunately he was as lazy as he was fat.

The story of the reign of Charles the Fat is really the story of how the Northmen besieged Paris, while the king, who was also Emperor of Germany, spent his time among his German barons.

Rollo was the name of the chief who now led the Vikings to Paris. He was a greater chief even than Hasting, of whom you read in the last chapter.

Seven hundred huge ships, with bright red sails, were one day seen to be making their way up the river Seine. These ships were the Viking fleet under Rollo.

The people of Paris resolved to defend their city against the fierce Northmen as long as they could.

Soon they heard that the town of Rouen, which is only a short distance from Paris, had been taken, and that Rollo with thirty thousand men was marching on Paris.

Hasting, now a respectable count, was sent to ask Rollo what he wished.

"Valiant warrior," said Hasting to Rollo, "whence come ye? What seek ye here? What is the name of your lord and master? Tell us this, for we be sent unto you by the King of the Franks."

"We be Danes," answered Rollo, "and all be equally masters among us. We be come to drive out the inhabitants of this land, and subject it to our country. But who art thou who speakest so glibly?"

Then, perhaps with some shame in his face, Hasting told how he had once been, as Rollo now was, a Viking chief. But Rollo interrupted him, saying with scorn, "We have heard tell of that fellow. Hasting began well and ended ill."

But the former chief had no wish to be taunted by Rollo. It may be the sight of the wild sea-robbers had brought to life a hidden wish to be again a lawless roving chief. In any case he stopped Rollo's taunts, demanding roughly, "Will ye yield you to the Emperor Charles?"

"We yield," answered Rollo, "to none. All that we take by our arms we will keep as our right. Go and tell this, if thou wilt, to the emperor whose envoy thou boastest to be."

So Hasting, none too pleased, withdrew from his meeting with Rollo, the chief of the Viking band.

It was the dreary month of November, 885 A.D., when Rollo led his army beneath the walls of Paris. But when he saw the great ramparts and defenses of the city, he hesitated to begin the attack.

Instead, he begged to speak with the bishop of the city, and being admitted to his presence he said, "Take pity on thyself and on thy flock. Let us pass through this city, and we will in no wise touch the town."

But the bishop was too wise to trust the Viking's words. Charles the Fat was in Germany, and had left the city in his charge, and in that of a brave man called Count Eudes.

So the bishop answered Rollo, "This city hath been entrusted to us by our king. If the city had been entrusted to thee, wouldst thou do as thou biddest me?"

"Nay," said Rollo, "sooner would I be slain than betray

my trust. Yet if thou yield not we will besiege thee, and famine shall force thee to give us the city."

But the bishop and Count Eudes agreed with the Viking in one thing. Sooner would they too be slain than betray their trust, so there was nothing for Rollo to do but fulfill his threat and besiege the city.

Thirteen months passed slowly away, for Rollo had surrounded Paris, and as each day dragged its slow length, the citizens were ever in sorer straits. Food grew scarce and famine stared the citizens in the face.

Messengers had been sent to Charles the Fat, telling him of the needs of his faithful subjects in Paris, but he was lazy and paid no heed to their distress.

Then Count Eudes determined that he would go to the king to ask him why he delayed to send help to his loyal citizens.

It was no easy matter to get through the enemy's lines, but messengers had already done so, and Count Eudes was brave and, when it was necessary, careful, and he got away unseen by the Northmen.

But by and by it became known that Count Eudes had escaped from the besieged city, and every opening was now strictly guarded by the enemy, that he might not be able to get back into Paris.

The citizens knew that the Vikings were on the watch for their brave leader, and they crowded on to the ramparts and towers watching anxiously for him to appear.

At length the count was seen in the distance. What would he do? Would he forsake the city seeing it so closely guarded?

The people trembled at the thought, for Count Eudes was brave and had won their trust.

But if the count was careful he was also, if need be, rash. As he drew near to the city, he saw that he could enter it only in one way.

Putting spurs to his powerful war-horse, he rode straight

forward through the lines of the bewildered Northmen, striking boldly with his battle-ax all who dared to come in his way. But, indeed, there were few who opposed the count. His boldness had so startled the Vikings, that Count Eudes was safe within the walls of the city before they had recovered from their surprise. As for the citizens, they welcomed the count's return with laughter and tears, as a starving people might well do.

Count Eudes had, however, succeeded in rousing the indolent king; for in November 886 A.D., after Paris had been besieged for a year, Charles the Fat did actually appear before the city with a large army.

But, after all, he proved a coward and a sluggard. In spite of the large army, he had not come to fight. About a month later, to the unspeakable anger of Count Eudes and the citizens, they found that Charles had bribed the Vikings with large sums of money to raise the siege of Paris.

So angry were the people, not only in Paris, but throughout France, that early in the following year they met together and deposed Charles the Fat, because he was not fit to be a king. Soon after Charles the Fat died in a monastery.

CHAPTER XII

ROLLO'S PRIDE

Count Eudes, who had won the hearts of the people during the siege of Paris, now became King of France.

His most troublesome foe was Rollo, the Northman, who not only seized many important towns, but at the same time took pains to win the friendship of the citizens he had conquered.

When Eudes died, ten years later, his brother, Count Robert of Paris, advised the new king to make terms with Rollo.

Charles the Simple was a lad, barely nineteen years of age, and he followed Count Robert's advice, sending ambassadors to Rollo, to offer him lands and the hand of the French princess, if he would become a Christian and a vassal of the king.

Rollo promised to give up his roving ways and become a loyal subject.

So the king gave his new vassal the beautiful country which lay between the river Seine and the sea. And that part of France is now called Normandy, because the Northmen or Normans settled there.

It was the custom for every new vassal to go to the king's palace to take the oath of fealty to the sovereign.

Charles the Simple was surrounded by his courtiers when Rollo arrived. It was also, I should tell you, usual, after the oath was taken, for the vassal to kneel to kiss the king's foot.

But Rollo, though he was willing to take the oath of

allegiance to Charles, was by no means willing to humble himself by kneeling to kiss the foot of the king. Moreover, his wild life had taught him little respect for such foolish customs.

"Never will I bend the knee to any man, nor will I kiss the foot of any man," cried Rollo, in a voice that no one dared to gainsay.

But some one must kiss the king's foot, and if Rollo would not, well, one of the Norman soldiers should do it in his stead.

So a rough Viking was unwillingly pushed to the front. At his master's command, refusing to kneel, he seized the king's foot and thrust it carelessly against his face, causing Charles to fall backward on his seat, amid the rude jests and laughter of the Northmen.

Rollo was now created the first Duke of Normandy, and this wild sea-roving Northman became the great-grandfather of William the Conqueror.

The nobles, with Count Robert of Paris at their head, now began to grow angry with their king, because he would have nothing to do with them, but chose as his favorite a man of humble birth, who was dishonest, and who daily grew more proud and haughty.

At length Count Robert demanded that the favorite should be dismissed, and when the king refused to listen to his demand, all the nobles rebelled and fought a great battle against Charles at Soissons in 923 A.D.

The nobles won the day, but Count Robert was slain. War, however, was still carried on by his son, Hugh the White, until at length Charles was a prisoner in the hands of his barons. For seven years he was carried from dungeon to dungeon, until he died.

Hugh the White, had he wished it, might now have become king, but intsead of ruling himself, he sent for Louis, the son of Charles the Simple, who had been brought up in England.

Louis did little save quarrel with his nobles, as did also his son and grandson when they, each in his turn, became King of France.

And during these reigns the nobles grew ever more powerful, until Hugh the White's son, Hugh Capet, Count of France, was king in all but name.

CHAPTER XIII

KING ROBERT AND THE POPE

THE Merovingian race of kings began with Clovis, and ended with a shadowy figure of a king called Chilperic. The Carlovingian race began with Pepin and ended with Louis V.

Hugh Capet, Count of Paris, had been the most powerful noble in France for several years before he became king.

In 987 A.D., however, he was raised to the throne by the nobles of northern France, and thus he became the founder of the Capetian line of kings.

Hugh's name Capet is said by some to have been given to him because, instead of a crown, he always wore a "cape," "cap," or "hood," dedicated to one of the saints called St. Martin. Others tell us that the size of the king's head made his people call him Capet, *caput* being the Latin word for head.

Although the nobles had given Hugh the title of King, they still considered themselves, if not quite, yet almost his equal. They could not forget that but lately he had held only the title of Count.

Some of the lords, especially those in the south of France, who had had nothing to do with bestowing on Hugh the title of King, refused to do homage to him as their sovereign. Others were outwardly loyal, but in their hearts they resented Hugh Capet's claims.

The king took no pains to soothe the pride of these haughty nobles. Indeed, his treatment made them even more resentful of his authority.

"Who made thee a count?" indignantly demanded Hugh of a noble who behaved in his presence as though the sovereign were still only the Count of Paris.

"Who made thee a king?" quickly retorted the count, to which rough answer, as far as we know, the king had nothing to say.

During the nine years that he reigned Hugh was constantly trying to weaken the power of the nobles. As he grew stronger he would punish them, too, for their haughty ways.

But, in spite of all he could do, the nobles remained more powerful than the king wished. To strengthen himself still more against his enemies, Hugh therefore thought it would be well to win the favor of the bishops and priests. He had inherited many rich lands and abbeys from his father, Hugh the White, and these he now bestowed upon the Church. He thus gained the goodwill of the clergy, and when they called him the "Defender of the Church," the title pleased him well. But what perhaps pleased him still more was that the bishops, who were powerful, and had great influence with the people, took his side against the barons.

After Hugh had been made "Defender of the Church," he would often lay aside his royal robes and appear before his people in the dress of an abbot.

His last words to his son Robert, who succeeded him in 996 A.D., were to bid him ever cherish the Church, and protect her treasures.

It was during the reign of Hugh Capet that the difference in language, in dress, and in manners, between the north and the south of France, became clear.

Those who lived in the south laughed at the way the people in the north pronounced their words. It was so much rougher and harsher than their way.

In dress, too, the southern people were more gay, and, as we would say, more fashionable, while their manners

were more polished and polite than those of the people who lived in the north of France. But in another chapter you will read more about those who lived in the south.

Robert the Pious began to reign when he was twenty years old. He was a gentle, simple prince, who loved music, and often he was to be seen in the church of St. Denis, singing in the choir, side by side with the monks.

"He read his Psalter daily," says an old chronicler, "and was gentle, gracious, polished, and he sincerely loved to do a kindness."

But these were rough days in which Robert the Pious lived, and his people often misunderstood or even despised his goodness, while of his kindness they were not slow to take advantage.

One day King Robert saw a priest, as he left church, steal a silver candlestick from the altar. Instead of reproving the thief, Robert the Pious said to him, "Friend, run for your life to your home," and at the same time he gave him money for the journey.

Meanwhile the candlestick was missed, and the priests began to search for the thief.

The king said nothing until he thought the man was far away. Then he asked the anxious seekers, "Why trouble yourselves so much about a candlestick? God has given it to one of his poor."

When Robert went for a journey, it was not in royal state, but accompanied only by twelve poor men. One of these poor men, knowing the king's gentleness, dared to cut a rich gold ornament from his robe. The king, though he saw what the poor man was doing, left him unrebuked.

The rough barons of France had little sympathy with Robert's ways, and soon they began to laugh at him, because he was not strong as well as kind.

After King Robert had reigned for two or three years, a great gloom slowly began to settle upon the country.

Many people believed that a thousand years after the birth of Christ the world would come to an end. And now the time was drawing near.

The nobles were afraid, and wished to atone for all the wrong things they had done. They could think of no better way to do this than to give their lands, houses, slaves to the Church, and to go themselves on a pilgrimage to Palestine, where Jesus had lived and died.

The poorer folk left their fields untilled, unsown, for where was the need to plow and sow when before harvest time they might all have perished? Rich and poor alike crowded into the churches to confess their sins.

The dreaded year 1000 dawned at last, and, to the wonder of every one, the sun still rose day after day, and the world still went on its quiet way. Then, little by little, the people forgot their fears, and went back to their old selfish, thoughtless lives. But the Church had grown richer and more powerful during those last terrible months, and it had now a stronger hold than ever over the people.

King Robert was, as you know, devoted to the Church, yet he drew down her anger on himself and on his people. He had married a lady named Bertha, whom he dearly loved. Queen Bertha was a cousin of the king, and the Pope said that cousins were forbidden to marry one another. The king must therefore send his wife away, or incur the anger of the Church.

But King Robert loved Bertha too well to send her away, so the Pope excommunicated both the king and the queen. This was a terrible punishment, for to be excommunicated meant to be banished from the Church and all her sacraments, and to be shunned and forsaken by every good Catholic.

No sooner had the Pope pronounced his sentence of excommunication, than the king and queen were deserted by their court, and forced to live almost entirely alone. They found it difficult sometimes to get enough to eat,

for all their servants had run away, save two poor slaves. Even they would not stay in the room with the king a moment longer than they could help, so great was the power of the Pope's curse.

But I have not yet told you the worst. As the king would not yield, the Pope next put the whole land under an Interdict or Ban.

An Interdict meant that all the churches were closed, that all the bells hung silent in the belfries, that the images of saints were taken down and laid upon beds of ashes and thorns, and that the pictures in the churches were covered up, although, as the churches were shut, there was no one to look at them.

As long as the Interdict lasted, no baptism service, no marriage service, could take place. The dead were buried as was needful, but no prayers were said over the grave.

Thus stricken and sad, the people suffered with their king.

King Robert, for all his gentle ways, defied the Pope for many weary weeks, but at length he could no longer bear to think of the sufferings of his people, and for their sake he sent Queen Bertha to a convent. And in the convent the poor queen often wept, for well she knew that never again would she see King Robert.

The Pope was triumphant. As for the king, he was at once taken back into the favor of the Church, and the Interdict was removed from the land. Then the doors of the churches were thrown wide open, and the bells rang joyful peals. The images, too, were put back in their niches, and the pictures were unveiled.

King Robert knew that he had made his people glad, but he never forgot Queen Bertha, not even when he married a beautiful lady called Constance, who unhappily was as cruel as she was beautiful.

Constance was the daughter of the Count of Toulouse,

one of the greatest nobles of southern France. In her father's house she had ruled as a queen, and was both gay and haughty. She and her lords and ladies brought with them to Paris many new customs and new ways of dressing.

"Short hair, shaven chins, ridiculous boots turned up at the toes," such were some of the new fashions; while the strangers' "mode of living, their appearance, their armor, the harness of their horses, are," says an old writer, "all equally whimsical." It seemed too that these people "thought and spoke as strangely as they dressed."

As I told you, Queen Constance was a cruel woman. Through her influence the king too sometimes forgot his kindly ways.

Two priests, one of whom was the queen's own confessor, were charged with not believing all that the Pope said they ought to believe. This crime was called Heresy.

The king, urged by the queen, actually commanded that these two priests should be punished for their heresy by being burned alive.

As the two priests passed Constance on their way to the stake, the queen, it is said, thrust out one of her confessor's eyes with a small iron-tipped staff which she held in her hand.

This was the first time that Christians put other Christians to death for not believing all that the Pope said they ought to believe.

Constance had three sons. She taught these princes no reverence for their father the king, and when they grew up they rebelled, and at length even took up arms against him.

King Robert was strong enough to compel his sons to lay down their arms, but their conduct and his wife's cruelty broke his heart. He died in the year 1031. If his family were not grieved at his death, his subjects wept bitterly, because they had lost the king who had almost always been kind and gentle.

"Widows and orphans did beat their breasts and went to and from his tomb, crying, 'Whilst Robert was king and ordered all, we lived in peace, we had nought to fear. May his soul . . . mount up and and dwell for ever with Jesus Christ, the King of kings.'"

Thus, amid the tears and blessings of his people, Robert the Pious was laid to rest.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TRUCE OF GOD

QUEEN CONSTANCE'S evil influence did not end when King Robert died.

Her youngest son Robert was her favorite, and she wished to see him on the throne of France. When therefore Henry, her eldest son, became king after his father's death, Constance was so angry that she did all she could to win the most powerful barons from their allegiance to Henry I. She succeeded so well that civil war broke out.

Henry I. determined to keep the crown that was his by right, and he begged the Duke of Normandy, a descendant of Rollo, to help him put down the rebellion which his mother had provoked.

Robert of Normandy at once came to the help of his king, and fought as his ancestors had fought of old, so valiantly, that ever after he was known as *Robert le Diable,* which means Robert the Devil.

Constance and her party were vanquished, and seeing that she had now nothing to gain by continuing to fight, the queen-mother made friends with her eldest son.

Henry I. showed that he could be generous, by forgiving his mother, and giving the title of Duke of Burgundy to his brother Robert, while the Duke of Normandy was rewarded for the help he had given to the king by the gift of large tracts of land which lay between the river Seine and the river Oise.

The war was over, but there was still great distress in the land. For three years the harvests had been growing poorer and poorer. Even the rich had little to eat, while the

peasants were forced to satisfy their hunger with roots which they found in the forests. When these failed they devoured human flesh.

After famine came the plague, and so many hundreds of poor folk died, that before they could be buried wolves came out of the forests and feasted upon the bodies.

So great was the distress that the bishops and clergy of France met together to see if they could do anything to help the poor oppressed people. The barons were still grinding them down, and exacting more taxes than were their due from their hungry, plague-stricken vassals.

We do not hear that the bishops and priests were able to give food to those who were starving, but they did what they could when they said that the "Peace of God" was to be held sacred. The "Peace of God" forbade the nobles to take from the poor more taxes than were their due. It also forbade fighting and violence throughout the land.

But if at first the "Peace of God" made the nobles curb their angry passions, and behave less harshly toward the peasants, they soon forgot all about it, and slipped back to their usual fierce and cruel ways.

"The lords do us nought but ill," cried the peasants. "Every day is for us a day of suffering, toil and weariness; every day we have our cattle taken from us to work for our lords."

At length the peasants met together to find, if it were possible, a way out of their troubles.

"Why suffer all this evil to be done to us, and not get out of our plight?" they said to one another. "Are we not men even as our lords? Let us learn to resist the knight, and we shall be free to cut down trees, to hunt and fish after our fashion, aand we shall work our will in flood and field and wood."

Poor peasants! Their wants were so simple—just to be allowed to fish, to hunt, and to go into the woods to cut firewood.

But when they ventured to send some of their number to the nobles to complain of their sufferings, and to tell their simple needs, listen to what was done.

The nobles were so angry that the peasants had dared to complain, that they cut off the hands and feet of their messengers. Then they sent them away, to go home as they could, and show to those who had sent them what they too might expect if they dared again to complain of the wrongs which they endured.

That such things could be done showed the bishops that the "Peace of God" had failed. They therefore now proclaimed the "Truce of God."

By the "Truce of God" they believed that at least certain days might be kept free from violence. It forbade any one to fight each week from Wednesday evening until Monday morning. Christmas Day, Easter, Lent, and indeed all the great saints' days were also set apart. And this proved of more use than the "Peace of God." The nobles, finding themselves forced to curb their angry passions on certain days, grew gradually less violent. Many of them laid aside their swords and brought their wealth to the altar, and then set out, either alone or in small companies, on a pilgrimage.

For already, in the year 1032, it had become a custom for those who were sorry for their sins to go to the Holy Land. If they might but touch the sepulcher in which the body of Jesus had lain, or spend a long night on the mount called Calvary, the pilgrims believed that all their sins would be forgiven.

Among the nobles who went to the Holy Land at this time was Robert, Duke of Normandy.

Before he set out the duke assembled the nobles of Normandy, and, lest he should not return, he appointed his little son William, who was then seven years old, to be their lord. This little boy became William the Great, Conqueror of England.

Duke Robert reached Jerusalem in safety, but on his way home he took ill and died.

At first the barons of Normandy refused to acknowledge William as their lord. Yet he was a manly lad, and had already begun to rule his compaions. At fifteen years of age he begged to be armed as a knight. When this was done, "it was a sight both pleasant and terrible to see him guiding his horse's career, flashing with his sword, gleaming with his shield, and threatening with his casque and javelin."

William could not subdue the rebellious barons alone, so he asked King Henry to come to his aid.

At first Henry helped the young duke, but afterwards, fearing lest William should grow too powerful, he went over to the side of the barons and fought against him.

But the young duke was brave and strong. His friends, too, were loyal and true. So when the armies of the king and of the duke met, Henry was utterly defeated, and never again ventured into William's lands with an army.

Two years after he had been defeated by William, Henry I. died, having done little for the good of his country.

CHAPTER XV

PETER THE HERMIT

In this chapter I shall have more to tell you of a strange, ugly-looking little man called Peter the Hermit than of Henry's son, who now became Philip I.

Philip had been a lazy, selfish boy, and he grew up into a wicked, self-pleasing man. And so when the chance came to do a noble deed, an unselfish act, Philip thrust the opportunity from him, that he might live idly and undisturbed in his luxurious palaces.

When William of Normandy asked the king to join him in his great expedition to conquer England, Philip would have nothing to do with the plans of his ambitious vassal.

So William sailed for England with a great army, and, as you know from your English history, he fought and won the battle of Hastings, in 1066, against King Harold of England.

From that day the Norman duke became also the King of England.

Philip I. may now have been sorry that he had not joined William in his great enterprise. In any case he became jealous of his powerful vassal, and resolved when the opportunity arrived to injure him.

About nine years passed, and then the chance for which Philip was waiting came.

Robert, the son of William the Conqueror, was angry with his father because he had refused to make him governor of Normandy.

Philip I. was only too pleased to encourage Robert's anger, and to help him stir up rebellion in Normandy.

When William the Conqueror found out what Philip was doing he was very angry, and his anger was a thing to be feared. He at once went to war with his enemy, and had already taken one of Philip's towns and burned it to the ground, when, as he rode through the conquered city, his horse slipped on a burning cinder. King William was thrown forward on his horse, and was so badly hurt that six weeks later he died.

Philip I. was not sorry that the enemy he had provoked could trouble him no more. It was the easier for him to spend his time in pleasure and in idleness. And this he still did, while France, and indeed the whole of Europe, was being roused as by a trumpet call.

The Holy City, Jerusalem, had been for many years in the hands of the Turks. As you know, they were a fierce and cruel people, and imprisoned, tortured, and even killed, the pilgrims to Jerusalem.

At last Europe was roused to try to rescue the Holy City from the hands of these cruel people. The expeditions which set out from France, from England, from Germany, for this purpose, were called Crusades, and the people who took part in them the Crusaders. It is of the first crusade that I wish now to tell you. It was a strange little man who wandered through France, calling on the people to rouse themselves to set the Holy City free. Peter the Hermit, as he was called, was ugly and small, but the keen bright eyes that looked out of his thin pinched face seemed to see right into the hearts of those to whom he spoke. He was not old, this plain-looking little man, but he had suffered much, so that already his hair and beard were white.

The Hermit wore a woolen tunic, and over that a serge cloak, which reached to his feet. His arms and his feet

were bare. Often he was to be seen riding on an ass, and holding in his hand a crucifix.

Peter had once journeyed to Jerusalem, and he had seen for himself how pilgrims were robbed by the Turks; how the places where Christ's blessed feet had trod were defiled by cruelty too great to be told.

So when Peter left Jerusalem he journeyed to Rome, his heart on fire with the evils he had seen and the wrongs he had borne in the Holy City. He was going to Rome to tell the Pope all that he had seen and suffered.

When the Pope, Urban II., had heard Peter's tale, he blessed him, bidding him go from town to town, from land to land, to tell all who would hear of the things he had seen in Jerusalem.

Thus it was that in 1094 the First Crusade began to be preached.

At first but a few came to hear Peter speak. There was nothing about the plain-looking little man to make them come. But the few who listened to his words soon brought others to hear, and gradually crowds gathered wherever Peter went. For this man, so small, so plain, had a great gift from God, the gift of speech.

When Peter spoke, his words fell as fire upon the hearts of those who pressed around him. As he told of all that he had seen in Jerusalem, the people almost believed that they were in Jerusalem, seeing the very sights Peter had seen. His words were indeed as a fire, and kindled in the hearts of the people a flame that did not die even when in very truth they stood at the gates of the Holy City.

For a year Peter went through France rousing the people. Then in 1095 many of those who had listened to him journeyed to a town called Clermont, where the Pope, Urban II., was now going to hold a great Council.

The days were already cold and wintry, for it was November when the people crowded into Clermont. Soon all the houses in the town were full, as well as those in the

villages round about. And still the people came in great numbers. Many of them were forced to put up tents in the meadows, where they would have been cold indeed, save for the fire which Peter had kindled in their hearts.

In an open space in the center of the town a platform was erected. Here, on a certain day, in the midst of a great throng of people, stood the Pope, with Peter the Hermit by his side.

"Men of France," cried Urban II., "right valiant knights . . . it is from you above all that Jerusalem hopes for help. Take part in this Holy War, I beseech you, and all your sins will be forgiven." Peter also talked to the people, telling them yet again of all the misery that Christians in Jerusalem suffered, until at length a great shout went up from the hearts of the people. "God willeth it! God willeth it!" they cried, and these words became the battle-cry of the crusaders.

Then from the Pope's own hands the people received the sign or badge of their great undertaking. There was but one sign fitting for such a warfare, the sign of the Cross. This was made of red silk or cloth, and was fastened on the crusader's cloak, or on the front of his helmet.

The Pope was a wise man, and he knew that it would take many months for a great army to get ready to march to Jerusalem, so he said that the first crusade should not start until about nine months later, in August, 1096.

But although the knights were ready to wait until they had made preparations for their long and difficult journey, the mob clamored to be led to the Holy City by Peter without further delay. And Peter and one poor knight, called Walter the Penniless, yielded to these foolish people. These crusaders, however, were not an army, but only a vast rabble of men, women and children, who were all unprepared for the long and difficult journey to Palestine.

Peter the Hermit, it is true, knew the way to the Holy Land, but he forgot how difficult it would be to feed so

great a multitude, and how impossible it would be for these poor folks to wrest the Holy Sepulcher from the Turks, if they ever reached Jerusalem.

The mob set out in great joy, but it was not long before the hardships of the journey began to make them grumble. They grew hungry, for Peter had not stayed to take provisions for so great a company. In their hunger they grew desperate, and when they reached a town they would plunder it, as though they were a band of robbers rather than pilgrims of the Holy Cross.

Thousands who set out died upon the way, of hunger or disease, while many more who reached Hungary were slain by the wild tribes who dwelt in that land.

At length Peter, with those of his company who were left, reached Constantinople. Here they took ship and crossed the Bosphorus into Asia Minor, only to be met by the Turks, who attacked them so fiercely that Peter was left with scarcely three thousand followers.

We hear no more of these poor people until Peter, and those who had not died from hunger or sickness, joined the real crusading army when at length it entered Asia Minor.

Meanwhile, the knights of France had assembled two great armies to fight in the Holy War. The nobles themselves sold their houses, their lands, their treasures, that they might have money to equip and feed their army.

Philip I. knew what his nobles were doing, but he neither helped nor hindered them. His own pleasures were engrossing all his time and thought.

The two French armies were joined by a third formed of Norman knights who had settled in Italy. The three armies were led by nobles who had already won renown on the field of battle.

Godfrey de Bouillon was one of these leaders. His father had been a warrior, his mother a saint, and those who watched Godfrey would say of him, "For zeal in war

behold his father, for serving God behold his mother." And they said this because they believed that this knight was warrior and saint in one.

Tancred, "a very gentle perfect knight," was another of the leaders of the first crusade.

The third and oldest of these great leaders was Raymond, Count of Toulouse. He had vowed that he would never return to France, but would stay in the east fighting the Turks as long as he lived in order to atone for his many sins.

It was a great host that at last, in August, 1096, set out for the Holy Land. It had many hardships to suffer from famine and disease before it reached Asia Minor.

As soon as they landed, however, the crusaders determined to attack Nicæa without delay. Nicæa was an important town belonging to the Turks.

As they marched toward this town, they met Peter the Hermit, followed by a small band of pilgrims. This band was all that was left of the vast rabble that had set out from France in 1096.

Peter told the leaders of the real crusade all that had befallen him and his followers, and then gladly joined the army for which he had been looking and longing for many weary months.

Nicæa was reached and at once besieged. The town was in the hands of a Turkish sultan called Kilidj Arslan.

When the sultan had heard that the crusaders were drawing near, he had gone to assemble all his forces. His wife, his children, and his treasures he had left in the town. He had also sent a message to the people, bidding them "be of good courage, and fear not the barbarous people who make show of besieging our city. To-morrow, before the seventh hour of the day, ye shall be delivered from your enemies."

The sultan did all he could to make his words come true. On the following day he arrived before the walls of his city with a large force, and fell upon the besieging

army. The crusaders fought bravely, Godfrey de Bouillon leading them on with the courage for which he was renowned. He himself killed a Turk, "remarkable amongst all for his size and strength," and whose arrows had been causing great havoc in the ranks of the crusading armies. Kilidj Arslan was defeated, and withdrew from Nicæa to find a fresh army.

For six weeks the crusaders besieged the sultan's town; and then, just when they believed it was ready to surrender to them, they saw waving from its towers the flag of the Greek emperor.

Now the Emperor Alexis had seemed to befriend the crusaders, but during the siege he had sent secret messages to the inhabitants of Nicæa, persuading them to yield to him. And this the people of Nicæa had done the more willingly because they had once belonged to the Greek empire, and Alexis had promised not to treat them as a conquered people, but as those who had returned to their former masters.

The crusaders were sorely disappointed, for they had hoped to plunder the town, while their leaders were wroth because the Emperor Alexis would allow not more than ten of their number to enter Nicæa at the same time. But it was useless to show the Greek emperor that he had angered them, so the knights determined to march on towards the south-east of Asia Minor, and thus to reach Syria.

In order to get provisions the more easily the vast army of the crusaders now divided into two.

One morning as Tancred led his host forward, it was suddenly attacked by a great number of Turks, who poured down upon it from the neighboring hills. These Turkish hordes were led by Kilidj Arslan, who had followed the crusaders after the fall of Nicæa, and had now taken them by surprise.

The Duke of Normandy, who was with Tancred, rushed

into the fray, waving his gold and white banner, and shouting, "God willeth it! God willeth it!" Another knight hastily sent a message to Godfrey de Bouillon, who was not yet far away, to come to their aid. Godfrey, with about fifty knights, galloped on before the main body of his army, and, joining Tancred, flung himself upon the enemy.

By noon Godfrey's whole army arrived, with trumpets blowing and flags waving. Kilidj Arslan began to think he would retreat, but his retreat was speedily turned to flight. For the crusaders pursued the Turks so fiercely that they fled in terror, and "two days afterwards they were still flying though none pursued them, unless it were God Himself."

After this victory the crusaders marched on toward Syria, but for the future they determined to keep together.

The armies had now to cross great tracts of deserted country, where neither food nor water was to be found, where there was no shelter from the burning sun.

Not only the soldiers but the horses suffered terribly and died in hundreds, and many of the knights were forced to ride on asses or oxen. These animals were hardier, and better able to stand the heat than the horses. And the heat was terrible, and made the whole army suffer more than even from lack of water.

One day the dogs that usually followed the army disappeared for some hours. When they came back their paws were wet.

The soldiers noticed the wet paws with joy, for they knew that the dogs must have found water, and without delay they set out to look for it. You can imagine with what delight the poor thirsty men at last discovered a small river, how eagerly they drank, and how they ran to tell their comrades the good news.

I may not stop to tell you of all the towns the crusaders besieged on their way to Jerusalem, nor of all that they suffered, but in the spring of 1099 the great army really

entered Palestine, and, in June of the same year, it at length caught sight of the Holy City.

"Lo! Jerusalem appears in sight. Lo! every hand points out Jerusalem. Lo! a thousand voices are heard as one in salutation of Jerusalem."

Thus, says the Italian poet Tasso, was the army moved at the sight of the Holy City.

After this first glimpse of the city neither the knights nor the rough soldiers dared to raise their eyes to look upon her, so great was their awe.

"In accents of humility, with words low-spoken, with stifled sobs, with sighs and tears, the pent-up yearnings of a people in joy and at the same time in sorrow, sent shivering through the air a murmur like that which is heard in leafy forests what time the wind blows through the leaves, or like the dull sound made by the sea which breaks upon the rocks, or hisses as it foams over the beach."

Jerusalem was in the hands of a large Turkish army, and the crusaders at once besieged the city.

Five weeks later she was theirs. Then alas! mad with triumph, the crusaders forgot that they were soldiers of the Cross. They slew the helpless inhabitants of the city; they plundered the houses and churches.

But soon they grew ashamed of their cruel deeds, and flinging aside their armor they clothed themselves in white robes. Then in shame and sorrow the crusaders climbed the hill of Calvary.

Jerusalem was taken on July 15, 1099, and about a week later the leaders of the crusade met together to choose a king to rule over the Holy City.

Robert, Duke of Normandy, was the first to be proposed.

"But he refused, liking better to give himself up to repose and indolence in Normandy, than to serve as a soldier the King of kings; for which God never forgave him."

Tancred was then asked to accept the great charge. But he wished for no higher rank than was already his.

Raymond, Count of Toulouse, was too old, and said that he "would have a horror of bearing the name of king in Jerusalem."

Godfrey de Bouillon did not wish to be king, yet being chosen not only by Tancred and the Count of Toulouse, but by all the other knights of the crusading army, he accepted the trust, although he refused to take the title of King. He would be called only "Defender and Baron of the Holy Sepulcher." Nor would he wear a crown. "I will never wear a crown of gold in the place where the Savior of the world was crowned with thorns," said the great knight, as simply as a child.

Thus, with the taking of Jerusalem, ended the first crusade.

Meanwhile, Philip I. was growing, as slothful people will ever do, more slothful.

His son Louis was now twenty-two years of age, and Philip thought it would be pleasant to lay the burden of kingship upon the shoulders of his son, and perhaps it was the wisest thing he could have done.

So Louis was crowned king, and Philip was free to live his own indolent life to the end.

But before he died Philip grew sorry for all the wrong he had done, and for all the good he had left undone. And to show that he was really sorry he did public penance as the priests decreed. He also began to give alms to the poor. In 1108 Philip I. died, and by his own wish he was buried in a quiet little church on the river Loire, rather than in the abbey of St. Denis, where the kings of France were laid to rest. For at the end of his life Philip I. knew himself to have been unworthy of the name of king, and even in death he wished to humble himself in the eyes of his people.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ORIFLAMME

THE time of which I have been telling you, from the death of Charlemange to the beginning of the reign of Louis the Fat, is known as the Dark Ages. And you will scarcely be surprised that these centuries should have so gloomy a name. For you have read of the wars of the kings, the rebellions of the nobles. You have heard how the lords ground down their vassals and trampled on their slaves, who were sold with the land as carelessly as a plow or a spade might be sold. You have seen, too, how the peasants, daring to tell the nobles of their misery, were punished by having their hands and feet cut off. It is well that the times when such things took place should be known as the Dark Ages.

But from the time of Louis the Fat the darkness began, little by little, to grow less dense. Louis himself began to lighten the darkness.

In spite of his great size, which made his people call him "the Fat," Louis VI. was no sluggard. He was indeed also called "the Fighter," because his body was so active; "the Wideawake," because his mind was so quick.

In Philip's listless hands the king's power had grown less, his dominions fewer. So now, though Louis was called King of France, he owned only five cities and the lands belonging to them. His power, too, scarcely reached beyond these five cities.

From Paris to St. Denis the road was safe, but farther

even the king could not travel without a strong bodyguard to protect him.

The barons had built great towers with gloomy dungeons along the highways, and as travelers passed they with their men-at-arms would sally forth, and take prisoners all whom they could. After robbing their captives the barons threw them into dungeons. Here they were often tortured until, in order to be set free, they promised to pay enormous sums of money.

Louis made up his mind that the barons should be punished, and more than that, that their power should be taken away.

To help him in this great work he had a friend who was also his prime minister. This was Suger, Abbot of St. Denis, with whom Louis had been educated.

The king himself had not many troops for his great undertaking. There were only his vassals and three hundred brave youths who had come to Paris, hoping to win their spurs in the service of their king.

But Suger and many other abbots and priests roused the peasants and townsfolk, and themselves led these rough troops to Louis's aid. The clergy were only too glad to fight against the barons, who had treated them with but scant courtesy, and had often robbed their monasteries and churches.

Thus, aided by the priests, Louis gradually cleared the highways of the robber bands, and forced the barons to live quietly in their castles. If they dared to disobey him he attacked their strongholds.

One of the most powerful of the barons was Hugh the Fair. He had trampled on the peasants and treated them worse than his dogs, until they hated him with all the strength they had.

When at length a priest led a band of these peasants against Hugh's castle, their anger against the noble was so terrible that Hugh might well wish himself far away.

Strong walls, iron gates, nothing would have kept the peasants out. But the priest who led them found a weak spot in the fortress, and through this the peasants crept within the walls, and Hugh and his followers were at the mercy of the mob.

King Louis meanwhile was attacking the castle at another point; and Hugh, fighting desperately, escaped from the mob, and surrendered himself to the king. Hugh's castle was plundered and then pulled to pieces, and he himself rendered harmless. And what befell Hugh the Fair befell many other barons throughout France.

The people, finding themselves freed from the worst oppressions of the nobles, were grateful to the king, and learned to love him well. As for the townsfolk, many of them were rewarded for their share in the struggle by being allowed to choose their own magistrates, to make their own laws, and to carry a standard or banner of their own choosing before them into battle. The towns to which Louis granted these liberties were called Communes.

In 1124, while he was still working for the good of his kingdom, Louis was threatened with war. Henry I. of England had made an alliance against France with his son-in-law the Emperor of Germany. The emperor had set out meaning to invade the east of France and to attack Rheims, the city in which the French kings were crowned.

Louis, nothing daunted, called together his vassals and commanded the barons to come with their troops to his aid. Many of the barons, having had proof of Louis's power to compel obedience, obeyed his summons. Others, who did not dare to refuse, took care to come too late to be of any use had a battle been fought.

When the soldiers had assembled, Louis went to the abbey of St. Denis for the Oriflamme, which was the national banner of France, and carried it to the head of

his army. There it waved, a banner of flame-red silk, edged with green, fastened to a rod of gold.

As the French word for gold is *or,* you will now understand the first part of the big name by which the banner was called. The other part *flamme* is our word flame.

But after all these preparations no battle was fought. For the German emperor, hearing of the great army which Louis the Fighter had assembled, and disturbed also by rumors of rebellion in one of his own German towns, first ordered his army to halt, and then ordered it to march back to Germany.

Soon after this the German emperor died, and peace was made with Henry I., King of England. The Oriflamme, brought with so much solemnity from St. Denis, was then taken back and laid once more on the altar of the abbey.

In 1129 Louis's eldest son, Philip, was crowned king. Louis hoped that Philip would soon be able to help him to govern the kingdom. But two years later an accident shattered his hopes. For Philip, who was now sixteen years old, was riding in the streets of Paris, which at that time were both narrow and dirty, when a pig, "a diabolical pig" Suger calls it, got between the legs of his horse, and both the prince and the animal fell to the ground.

Philip was so badly hurt that he died the same night.

When the king knew that his son was dead his grief was terrible. He shut himself up alone, and for days refused to take any interest in his people.

About a fortnight after his brother's death King Louis's second boy was crowned king. Six years later, in 1137, Louis died, and his young son came to the throne.

Suger, the Abbot of St. Denis, tells us that when Louis VI. was ill he was carried on a litter to St. Denis, where he had hoped to die. "As he went," says the abbot, "all men ran together from castle and town, or from the plow-tail in the field, to meet him and show their de-

votion to the king who had protected them and given them peace."

In the reign of Louis VI. the schools of Paris grew famous. One of the greatest teachers in these schools was Abelard, a man of great eloquence and a famous scholar. Many people journeyed from distant lands to Paris for the sake of listening to this wonderful teacher.

With the name of Abelard is joined the name of Héloïse, one of his pupils, whom he dearly loved.

Héloïse, although she loved Abelard, became a nun at his bidding, but when she died she was laid in the tomb where her master had been buried. The letters which they wrote to one another in Latin are so beautiful that they are still read with delight.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SECOND CRUSADE

Louis VII. was called "the Young," because he was only eighteen when he began to reign, but the name clung to him until he died at the age of sixty.

Suger, the Abbot of St. Denis, who had been the friend and minister of Louis VI., had also been the tutor of the young king.

When Louis the Young was grown to be a man, Suger still had great influence over him, and it was really the abbot who ruled the kingdom.

But though Suger had great power, he lived quite quietly and simply in a tiny cell in the abbey of St. Denis. His bed was of straw, his bedclothes only a rough woolen counterpane. If any one visited the abbot in his cell, he would not have seen the rough couch upon which Suger slept, for through the day it was carefully covered with a carpet.

By his father's wish Louis the Young had married Eleanor, a rich princess whose father ruled Aquitaine in the south of France, as well as many other wealthy provinces. As her dowry she brought both her lands and wealth to the young king.

But though the princess was rich, she was so different in character from Louis, that it was not easy for either of them to live happily together.

Queen Eleanor was gay, ambitious, selfish; while Louis, trained by the devout Abbot of St. Denis, was grave, humble, and unselfish.

About five years after he began to reign, Louis the Young went to war with one of his barons. The king's soldiers set fire to Vitry, the town which they were besieging. As it was built of wood the flames spread to the church, in which the inhabitants of the town had taken refuge. When the poor people saw that they would be burned to death, they uttered piercing cries, and these cries reached the ear of the king.

Had it been possible Louis would even then have saved the people, but the flames had spread so quickly that it was too late to do anything, and they all perished.

The king could never forget the cries he had heard, and blamed himself for what had happened. He determined to do penance for this and all his other sins by going on a pilgrimage.

At this very time St. Bernard, the great and holy Abbot of Clairvaux, was going from city to city throughout France rousing the people, even as Peter the Hermit had done, to go on a crusade against the Turks.

Edessa, one of the great strongholds of the Christians in the east, had been captured by the Turks, who had then cruelly massacred the inhabitants. These tidings reached France while St. Bernard was preaching the Second Crusade. It added to the power of his words as he cried, "Christian warriors, He who gave His life for you to-day demandeth yours."

King Louis heard, and believed that this was the penance for which he had been seeking. The multitude, too, who listened shouted the old battle-cry of the crusaders, "God willeth it! God willeth it!"

Then Louis, kneeling at the feet of St. Bernard, took from his hand the Cross, the badge of the Holy War. Knight after knight followed the king's example. The people also clamored for "Crosses, Crosses," until St. Bernard tore up his garments that the pieces might be made into badges for the eager multitude.

From France the abbot, still preaching the crusade, journeyed into Germany.

The Emperor, Conrad III., was not as easily persuaded to join the movement as St. Bernard wished. Conrad believed, and perhaps truly, that his own kingdom needed his presence.

Then one day, when the emperor was present in church, St. Bernard drew a picture of Jesus bearing His cross and reproaching Conrad because he had not helped Him to carry it.

The emperor, as he listened, was strangely moved. He interrupted the preacher, crying, "I know what I owe to Jesus Christ, and I swear to go whither it pleaseth Him to call me."

And so in 1147, when the second crusade set out for Palestine, Louis VII. and Conrad III. were each at the head of a large army.

Conrad reached Asia Minor first. Before Louis could join him the Turks had fallen upon the German army and utterly defeated it. Those who escaped joined the French army, and together they began to march across Asia Minor. But Conrad went back to Constantinople.

King Louis gained a great victory over the Turks close to the river Meander, but soon after his army got scattered and lost among the narrow passes of the mountains in Pisidia.

The Turks had foreseen that this would happen, and were awaiting the scattered army as it struggled in small companies out of the narrow mountain passes.

Louis's bodyguard was slain before his eyes. The king, left alone, placed himself against a rock, and fought with his sword so desperately, that at length the Turks who had attacked him turned and fled. Had they known it was the king, they might have been less ready to leave their prize.

When the Turks had fled, Louis, glancing round, saw close at hand a riderless horse. He lost not a moment in

mounting it, and galloping off he soon rejoined his advanced guard, who had feared that their king was slain.

The army now continued its march until it arrived at a small seaport on the Mediterranean. King Louis had hoped to reach Antioch by land. But to march there would still take forty days, and food was scarce, while to go by sea would take only three days.

Unfortunately it was impossible to provide ships for the whole army. At first King Louis refused to desert those who had followed him so far, but before long he was persuaded to embark with as many knights as the ships would hold, and the army was left to its fate.

Before he sailed the king gave all the money and provisions he had to the soldiers to help them on their long and dangerous march to Antioch. But only a remnant of the army ever set out on that march. For no sooner had the king and his nobles sailed than the Turks fell upon the forsaken soldiers, and many of them were slain or taken prisoners.

When Louis reached Antioch in March 1148, he heard of the terrible fate that had overtaken his army; and again, as when the people of Vitry were burned, he felt that he was responsible for the terrible disaster.

In April King Louis reached Jerusalem, where the Emperor Conrad, disguised as a pilgrim, also arrived accompanied by only a few knights. Soon afterward the remnant of the French and German armies joined their kings, who at once determined to lay siege to Damascus.

But the town was too strong to be taken by the feeble force which was now all that was left of the united armies. The siege was raised, and the king and the emperor went back to Jerusalem. Conrad, discouraged and disappointed, returned to Germany soon after the siege of Damascus had been raised.

Louis could not make up his mind to go home. He had done so little, and lost so large a part of his army, that he

was ashamed to face his faithful minister Suger. Gradually many of the knights went back to France, but Louis lingered in Jerusalem.

At length the entreaties of Suger, who had sent messengers to beg the king to come home, were successful, and in the autumn of 1149 Louis was once more in France. Of the great army with which he had set out for Palestine, only two or three hundred knights were left to journey home with the king.

Suger, who had been regent during the king's absence, welcomed him with joy, and, having given Louis an account of his work, retired to St. Denis. Here he spent the rest of his life, ruling his abbey as wisely as he had ruled the kingdom of France.

Three years after Louis's return from the crusade Suger died. The king missed his minister sorely, but perhaps the kingdom missed his strong hand even more. Louis had called Suger the Father of the Country, and in the years to come it was by this name that he was long remembered.

A few months after Suger's death Queen Eleanor left Louis to marry Henry Plantagenet, Count of Anjou. She brought to her new husband the rich provinces of Aquitaine and Poitou.

A chronicler who lived in Anjou at this time, and ought to have known the count, tells us that he was "vigorous in war, marvelous in prudence of reply, frugal in habits, munificent to others, sober, kindly, peaceable. He bore himself so wisely, defended himself so manfully, that all men, even his foes, praised him."

It was this worthy count who became Henry II., King of England. And you can easily understand that Louis was not at all pleased that so powerful a ruler as the King of England should also possess so many rich provinces in France.

From 1154, when Henry Plantagenet became King of England, the struggle between him and Louis never ended.

And long after Henry II. and Louis VII. had ceased to reign, the struggle between the two countries was continued, until at length an English king laid claim to the throne of France.

Meanwhile Louis, forsaken by Eleanor, married again. His second wife, however, died in 1160. Then Louis married a third time, and in 1165 a son was born, heir to the throne of France.

The little prince was named Philip, but the people in their gladness called him *Dieu donné,* the Gift of God.

When Philip was fifteen years old the king wished his son to be crowned. The day before the coronation, however, Philip went out to hunt and lost himself in a forest. Cold and bewildered, he wandered about all night, and only in the morning did he find his way back to the palace.

Unfortunately the prince had caught cold during the night in the forest, and soon he grew so ill, Louis feared that his son would die.

Then the king did a strange thing. He left the prince lying ill in bed, and went to England on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Thomas à Becket.

When Thomas à Becket had been archbishop, King Louis had befriended him. Perhaps he hoped that now the archbishop had become a saint he would plead with God that the little sick Prince of France might get well.

At the end of five days, so quickly had Louis journeyed, he was back at the bedside of his son, who was already much better.

But the king himself, worn out with anxiety and the haste of the journey, took ill, and was unable to be present at the coronation of the prince.

During his illness he begged that all his money and his garments might be brought to him. Then with his own

royal hands he divided both money and clothes among the poor, who by his request had been brought into the room where he lay.

In September 1180, a few months after the coronation of his son, Louis VII. died.

CHAPTER XVIII

ARTHUR, PRINCE OF NORMANDY, DISAPPEARS

PHILIP II. was only fifteen years old when he began to reign. He was a proud, ambitious boy, and eager to use his kingly power. He had often dreamed that he would make France as great as it had been in the time of Charlemange. His courtiers, and those of his people who knew his ambition, called him Philip Augustus, which meant Philip the Great, or the Imperial. Others named him Augustus for no other reason than that he was born in the month of August.

Like his grandfather, Louis the Fat, Philip wished to make the nobles less powerful, although indeed they had now fewer privileges than when Louis came to the throne.

The Duke of Burgundy had, however, provoked the young king. Philip therefore attacked one of his castles, and took his eldest son prisoner.

When the duke was at length compelled to ask for peace, Philip would grant it only on certain harsh conditions. The duke, not being powerful enough to fight against his sovereign, was forced to agree to whatever terms the king chose to impose. Whereupon Philip, who after all was but a boy, was so pleased to get his own way that he said, "The duke shall be my friend without any conditions," and he then at once repealed the harsh terms he had made shortly before.

Philip's chief friend was Richard, the son of Henry II., King of England.

Now Richard might be a good friend, but he was a bad

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son. He took up arms against his father, and the French king encouraged him to rebel.

Philip himself attacked Aquitaine, which Henry II. had entrusted to Richard's care. Richard proved faithless to his trust, doing little to defend his father's province. It even seemed that he was going to hand it over to Philip. But before this had happened Henry made peace with the French king, and the English prince was saved from a treacherous deed.

After peace had been made between the two kings, Richard hastened to Philip's camp, lived in the same tent as the king, sat at his table, and even, it is said, slept in the same bed.

Again and again Henry and Philip were on the point of war, but again and again war was put off, while the kings met to settle their disputes under an ancient elm tree which stood on the boundary between France and Normandy.

At one of these meetings Philip and Henry forgot, for a time, their own quarrels. For terrible tidings had come from the east.

Since Godfrey de Bouillon had been elected King of Jerusalem after the first crusade, eight kings had reigned. These eight kings were each French, and the last one had now in 1187 been taken prisoner by the dreaded Saladin, and Jerusalem was once again in the hands of the Turks.

It was early in January 1188 that Philip and Henry, meeting under the elm tree, forgot their own quarrels, and spoke only of the need of a new crusade to deliver the Holy City from the hands of the Infidels. Before they separated the kings had agreed to make preparations to set out on the third crusade.

Unfortunately Philip and Henry soon began to think of their own disputes. The French king indeed grew so impatient, that in a fit of passion he cut down the ancient elm tree, saying he would hold no more meetings for

peace beneath its branches. Before the year 1188 ended, war broke out between the two kings.

But Henry II., deserted by his nobles and betrayed by his sons, was soon forced to ask for peace. Philip's terms were hard, for Henry II. was forced to own himself the French king's vassal, to yield to him the duchy of Berri, which lay south of the river Loire, and to promise to pardon all those who had betrayed him.

When the list of traitors was handed to the king, the first name was that of his own son John. Henry had loved John and forgiven him much, but this new treachery broke his heart, and he fell ill and died.

Richard now became King of England, and before long Philip and he had ceased to be friends. For in the third crusade, which set out in 1189, led by Philip Augustus and Richard, the English king was so brave that he became the hero of the armies, and won his well-known name of Cœur de Lion, the Lion-hearted. Then Philip grew jealous of Richard and returned to France, leaving part of his army to help his rival to carry on the war in the east.

Before he left Philip solemnly promised that, during Richard's absence, he would not attack his kingdom or harm him in any way. As he journeyed home, however, he asked the Pope to release him from his promise. The Pope refused, but Philip was no sooner back in France than he hastened to make friends with Prince John, who in his brother's absence was treacherously doing all he could to win the crown for himself.

Richard meanwhile had reached Palestine, and was within sight of Jerusalem. But knowing he had not an army strong enough to take the city, he covered his face with his cloak, refusing to look upon her, since he was unable to deliver her from her foes.

Soon afterwards he fell sick, and so making a treaty with the sultan, which secured the safety of pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem, he set out, by sea, for England.

Being shipwrecked he tried to cross Austria in disguise, for the Archduke of Austria was his enemy. He was, however, discovered and taken prisoner. The duke sold his royal captive to the Emperor of Germany for a large sum of money, and by the emperor Richard was thrown into prison.

When Philip knew that Richard was a prisoner he at once, in spite of his promise, attacked Normandy, of which province Richard was duke. It was bad enough that Philip should do this; it was surely even worse that Prince John, Richard's own brother, should help him. Together, too, they offered the German emperor large sums of money if he would but keep his royal captive safe.

But you have read the story of how a minstrel, called Blondel, who loved Richard, went in search of his king, and at last found out his prison. And you remember how he came back and told the English, who at once paid a heavy ransom that Richard might be set free.

Then indeed Philip and Prince John had cause to fear. Even the German emperor took the trouble to tell them to beware, for, said he, "the Devil is unchained," and by the Devil he meant no other than Richard the Lion-hearted.

Prince John was a coward as well as a traitor, and he hastened to make peace with his brother.

Richard had still, however, to deal with Philip.

He had reached England in 1194, and soon after his return he set out for Normandy with a large army.

The war with Philip lasted several years. Richard besieged a few towns, and fought a few unimportant battles. Then one day, in the year 1199, as he was besieging a castle, a soldier shot an arrow at random from the castle wall. The arrow wounded Richard, and ten days later he died. Philip had no longer anything to fear from his powerful rival.

Prince John at once caused himself to be proclaimed King of England and Duke of Normandy.

But he was not able to take possession of Normandy peaceably, for Arthur, a nephew of his own, claimed the province, and Philip, fearing lest the King of England should grow too powerful, gladly supported Prince Arthur's claim.

The people of Normandy had no love for John, so they sided with his nephew the prince, and Philip was thus easily able to proclaim Arthur, Duke of Normandy.

Soon after this King John succeeded in taking his nephew prisoner. For a short time Prince Arthur lay in a dungeon, wondering how he could escape from his cruel uncle.

Then one day, so it is said, King John came to take the prince out in a boat on the river Seine. The young lad was glad to leave his dungeon and live in the sunlight once again. He was pleased, too, that his uncle was kind. But before they had rowed far, King John suddenly drew his sword and stabbed his nephew, throwing the body into the river.

It may be that King John did not do this cruel deed, but the young prince was never seen again. Philip believed John was guilty, and summoned him, as Duke of Normandy and therefore his vassal, to appear before him. But King John paid no heed to the French king's summons. He was therefore tried, even though he was not present in the court, and found guilty of murder, and Normandy was declared to be his no longer.

King Philip then once more invaded Normandy; but John, though he was in the town of Rouen, took no notice of Philip's movements. He was lazy, and his courtiers were gay, so they idled their time until Philip's army actually reached the gates of Rouen.

Then indeed King John bestirred himself, not to fight but to flee, as quickly as might be, to England.

Thus the French king was left to take possession of Normandy, which therefore in 1204 became a part of the kingdom of France. And so wisely did Philip treat the Normans that they were content to own him as their king.

CHAPTER XIX

THE BATTLE OF BOUVINES

About four years after Normandy had become part of France, a great crusade was undertaken by the French. This crusade was not, as you would expect, to go to the east, or to fight against Saracens. It was to go to the beautiful provinces in the south of France; it was to war against French people. For in the fair provinces of Languedoe, Provence, Aquitaine, the people were, so the Pope declared, heretics; that is, they were enemies of the Pope, and worshiped God in other ways than did those who belonged to the Church of Rome. These heretics were called Albigensians. They lived careless, happy lives in the sunny south of France. But in 1208 they were roughly roused from their happiness.

The Pope, Innocent III., had ordered the nobles of France to put on the Cross, collect an army, and go slay the Albigensians, as though they were Turks nad Infidels.

So great was the army which assembled for this cruel crusade, that an old chronicler tells us, "From near and far they come; there be men from . . . Burgundy, France and Limousin; there be men from all the world. Never did God make scribe who, whatsoever his pains, could set them all down in writing, in two months or in three."

Into the south this countless army poured, led by Simon de Montfort, the father of the Simon de Montfort of whom you have read in your English history in the time of Henry III.

This Simon de Montfort was a fierce and cruel soldier, and the men under his control were allowed to do wicked

and cruel deeds. They had no care for women or little children, but killed them as readily as they killed strong men. They laid waste the beautiful province of Languedoc, and burnt all her villages.

Raymond, Count of Toulouse, one of the nobles of the south, did all he could to help the Albigensians. But his army was small compared with that of the crusaders; moreover, the Pope showed his displeasure by excommunicating the Count. Raymond then submitted to Innocent III., and before the war was over he was forced to join the crusaders, and even to lead them against his own people.

The town of Beziers was one of the strongholds of the heretics. It was attacked by Simon de Montfort and taken. Then the city was burnt, and every person in it was slain. Yet the inhabitants were not all heretics. There were many whom the Pope would have called true believers. One of the knights of the crusading army, anxious to spare whom he could, asked an abbot how he might know the true believers from the heretics. "Kill them all," was the brutal answer; "God will know His own."

This Albigensian crusade, begun, as I told you, in 1208, lasted for nearly twenty years. In 1218, however, as Simon de Montfort was besieging the town of Toulouse, a large stone, shot from the walls, hit the cruel captain and crushed him to death. When the Albigensians knew that their great enemy was dead, they roused themselves to a tremendous effort, and drove the crusaders out of their provinces. Thus for a time the war was at an end.

King Philip had not joined in the war against the Albigensians, but he had looked on, well pleased to see that the power of the nobles in the south was being weakened.

As a boy, you remember, Philip had dreamed that he would make France great, as it had been in the days of Charlemagne, and that he would spoil the insolence and power of the nobles. He had now added Normandy to the French crown, and been welcomed by the barons as her

king. He had also seen the powerful nobles in the south of France beaten and stripped of their possessions by the crusading army. But Philip was not yet content. Why should he not conquer England, where King John was hated by his subjects? So he assembled a large army, and was ready to sail when the Pope interfered. For King John had begged for the Pope's protection, and had promised to pay a yearly tribute to Rome if he would save the country from the French.

As John had promised to pay tribute, the Pope looked on him as his vassal, and on England as his own. Philip was forbidden to invade the land. The French king was indignant that his plans should be disturbed, but he had no wish to incur the Pope's anger. Instead of sailing to England, Philip therefore led his army into Flanders in order to punish Ferrand, the count of that province. For when Philip had summoned the count, as his vassal, to help him invade England, Ferrand had refused to have anything to do with the war.

On the approach of Philip, the German emperor, Otho IV., a nephew of King John, and also a large number of English knights and archers, joined the Flemish.

Before the battle Otho assembled his men and said, "It is against Philip himself, and him alone, that we must direct all our efforts; it is he who must be slain first of all, for it is he alone who opposes us and makes himself our foe in everything. When he is dead, you will be able to divide the kingdom according to our pleasure." And then the emperor promised the Count of Flanders that when they had won the day he should have Paris for his prize.

Philip on his side was supported by many brave men. William des Barras, most famous of all brave knights, was there; while bishops used to handle the sword were on the battlefield among his followers. Many Commune towns also sent their trained bands of citizen soldiers to help

their king in his struggle against Germany, Flanders, and England.

The two armies marched through Flanders, and on Sunday, August 27, 1214, Philip reached Bouvines, not far from Tournay.

At Bouvines there was a bridge across the river Marque, and, while his army slowly passed over it, Philip threw himself down to rest under an ash tree which grew close to a little chapel.

As he lay there a messenger hastened to him, crying that his rearguard had been attacked by Otho, and was in dire need of help. Philip at once ordered a band of soldiers to hasten back to the rearguard. With them he sent the sacred Oriflamme, which had been taken across the bridge before the van of the army. Then the king himself went into the little chapel to pray. Coming out in a few moments he shouted, "Haste we to the rescue of our comrades!" and rode off to meet the enemy "with a glad countenance," while his knights cried lustily, "To arms! to arms!" and followed after their king.

The soldiers of the Communes were the first to attack the knights of Flanders. The knights were indignant that these ill-armed citizens, as they considered them, should dare to oppose them, and they fought desperately, until the French nobles were forced to ride up to the support of the citizen soldiers.

Soon the battle became general, and after three hours' conflict the Count of Flanders was taken prisoner. The German soldiers, remembering their emperor's words, forced their way to the French king, unhorsed him, and all but killed him. Then a great cry arose, and William des Barras, hearing it, let go the German emperor whom he had seized, and sped to the help of his king. The troops of the Communes at the same time rallied around Philip, and he was saved.

Otho's horse meanwhile was wounded. The animal

reared with pain, then turned and fled from the battlefield, carrying his master with him.

The French were now everywhere victorious, and before night the battle of Bouvines had been won.

Many counts were taken prisoners, and these Philip gave to his knights that they might ransom them for a heavy sum of money.

Ferrand, Count of Flanders, however, who had defied the king's summons, was taken by Philip as a prisoner to Paris.

After the battle of Bouvines the French king was, as he had desired to be, the most powerful sovereign, not only in France, but in Europe.

In 1215 King John of England signed the Great Charter, as your English history tells. But he soon annulled it, and then his subjects were so angry that they offered the English crown to King Philip's eldest son Louis.

So Prince Louis went to England, and nearly all the great barons were glad to see him, and flocked to his side. But soon after this King John died, and then the barons were sorry that they had asked a French prince to reign. Now their only wish was to get rid of him, and to make this easier they proclaimed King John's young son Henry, King of England. They then defeated Louis and his French troops at Lincoln, and shut him up in London, where the citizens still supported his cause.

Philip sent a French fleet to aid his son, but it was utterly defeated; whereupon Louis made terms with the English and went back to France, while Henry III. reigned in England.

Besides adding to his dominions Philip improved his capital, and the streets of Paris were no longer allowed to remain narrow or dirty. He also began to build the palace of the Louvre, which was used as a prison as well as a home for the kings of France.

After a long reign of forty-three years Philip Augustus

died in 1223, having accomplished many of the things he dreamed of doing as a boy.

Of Philip's son, Louis VIII., called the Lion, there is little to tell. He reigned for three years, and during that short time any effort he made for the good of his people was due to the wisdom of his queen, Blanche of Castile.

One of Louis's first acts was to summon Henry III. of England, as a vassal of France, to attend his coronation.

Henry III. was only a child, but the English barons answered that Normandy should be restored to England before their king would own himself a vassal of the French sovereign.

As Louis did not mean to give up Normandy, war was his reply to the haughty English lords.

But after besieging and taking Rochelle, an important town by which the English could easily enter France, Louis made a truce with England, so that he might be free to carry on war against the people in the south of France; for the crusade against the Albigensians had again broken out.

The king led a large army to the town of Avignon, and demanded that he and his soldiers should be allowed to pass, armed, through the city. The citizens refused, and kept their gates shut. Then the king besieged the town, but before it was reduced fever was raging in the French camp.

At length the citizens of Avignon surrendered, whereupon Louis marched away northwards, meaning to return and crush the Albigensians by taking Toulouse.

But the fever which had spread among his soldiers now took hold of the king, and he grew ill and died in 1226.

He left behind him the beautiful and noble Queen Blanche, and a little son of twelve, named Louis.

CHAPTER XX

THE VOW OF ST. LOUIS

"THE Hammer," "the Fat," "the Young," "the Wide-awake"—these are some of the names by which the French people called their kings, and they may at times have made you smile.

But now you have come to a king whom his people named "the Saint," and that is a title so great that you will hold in reverence the king to whom it was given. As you read of the reign of Louis IX., you will find that the name became him well.

Louis IX., or St. Louis, lost his father, as you know, when he was only twelve years old. But his mother, Blanche of Castile, trained him so wisely, that when he became a man he was well able to be a king of men.

Blanche taught her son to be kind, unselfish, true, and as soon as he was able to understand, he knew that his mother would rather have him die than that he should say words or do deeds that were unworthy of a king.

The mother of Louis was a brave woman, and she had need of all her courage while her boy was young. For the nobles banded themselves together against the young king and his mother, thinking that now was the time, while the government was in the hands of a woman, to win back the lands and the privileges that had been wrested from them by Philip Augustus.

So when the barons were summoned to Rheims in 1226 to attend the coronation of the little prince, only a few of them obeyed the call. The others assembled an army,

hoping to subdue the queen and get possession of the young king.

But Blanche was a clever woman, and she determined to win to her side Theobald, Count of Champagne, the leader of the rebel lords. And so successful was she that before long he became her staunch friend. "By my faith, madame," she had the joy of hearing the count say, "my heart, my body, my life and all my lands are at your command, and there is nothing to please you which I would not do, and against you and yours, please God, I will never go." This was a victory for Queen Blanche greater than the victory of a pitched battle.

Two years after he had been crowned the rebel lords still hoped to seize King Louis. For when Blanche had halted with her son at the town of Montlhéry on their way to Paris, she found that the rebel troops were between her and the capital. Undismayed, the queen-mother despatched messengers to the citizens of Paris to ask for help, and right royally did they answer her appeal.

For "they went forth all under arms and took the road to Montlhéry, where they found the king and escorted him to Paris, all in their ranks and in order of battle." Indeed, the road to Paris was lined with men-at-arms, "who besought the Lord that He would grant the king long life and prosperity, and that He would defend him against all his enemies. And this God did."

As Louis grew older, the people learned to love their king, so gentle he was and kind, yet at the same time so brave and strong. Of his love for his people there was no doubt.

When Louis was twenty years old his mother found him a little bride. Her name was Margaret, and she was only twelve years of age.

Good as Queen Blanche was, her love for her son was so great that she forgot that Margaret would sometimes like to be alone with her lord.

Even when the little bride was ill, the queen-mother made so many demands on Louis's time that at length Margaret rebelled, crying indignantly, "Alas, madame, neither dead nor alive will you let me see my lord." After that the king refused to leave the little queen until she was well.

In 1242 Henry III., King of England, came to France with a small army, hoping to win Normandy once again for England. He was joined by Count de la Marche, one of the French king's rebel lords.

But Louis showed the mettle of which he was made. He gathered together a large army, and entering Poitou he took town after town before Henry was ready to fight.

He then marched to Taillebourg on the river Charente. The English, with Count de la Marche, were on the opposite bank, but they had left the bridge across the river unguarded. The French at once began to cross it, and to attack the English. But the enemy was too strong for them, and their ranks began to waver. King Louis, seeing just where he was needed, dashed into the forefront of the fight. The English were forced to give way and retreat to Saintes. Here another battle was fought, and the English were totally defeated. The rebel Count de la Marche surrendered to King Louis, who pardoned him, but kept all the lands which he had won from the Count in battle.

Henry III. fled to Bordeaux, and there he spent his time in pleasure, until in 1243 he made peace with Louis, and returned to England "with as much bravery as if he had conquered France."

But there had been sickness in the French camp, and Louis went back to Paris ill, smitten by the fever which had carried off many of his soldiers.

Day after day the king grew worse, until all over France the people wept, lest they should lose the king they loved so well.

Louis himself believed that he was dying, and said fare-

well to his household, bidding them be good servants of God.

His wife, his mother, his brothers, lingered in his room, praying that God would spare him whom they loved. But the king lay so still that one of his nurses thought he was dead.

Soon, however, he rallied, and asked to see the Bishop of Paris. When the holy man arrived, Louis, in a feeble voice, begged him to place on his shoulder "the Cross of the voyage over the sea." This could only mean that Louis had made a vow to go as a crusader to the Holy Land.

In vain did Queen Margaret and Queen Blanche entreat the king to make no vow until he was stronger, in vain did the bishop plead with him to wait.

"I will neither eat nor drink," said the king, "until the Cross is laid upon my shoulder." Then the bishop, not daring to refuse, did as the king desired, while his mother, seeing that he had taken the Cross, sorrowed as though her son were dead.

From that day Louis grew better, and there was joy and thanksgiving throughout France.

For three years the king stayed at home, his barons doing all they could to shake his purpose to go to Palestine. But Louis was still determined to go.

The bishop and his mother made one last effort to shake the king's resolve. "My lord king," said the bishop, "bethink you that when you received the Cross you were so weak you scarce knew what you did."

"My son," said the queen-mother, "remember that God loves obedient children." Then, as the king was silent, she added that she would herself send troops to Palestine if he would but stay at home and rule his kingdom.

So quietly did the king listen that for a moment his mother and the bishop believed that they had won the day. Even when he spoke they were not at first undeceived.

"You say that weakness of mind was the cause of my

taking the Cross," said Louis, smiling. "So, then, since you desire it, here I lay down the Cross and resign it to you," and tearing the sign from his shoulder he handed it to the bishop.

Then before either his mother or the holy man could speak, Louis continued, his face grave, his voice firm: "My friends, now I lack not sense and reason, I am neither weak nor wandering of mind. Give me back, then, my Cross. For He who knows all things knows that no food shall pass my lips until my Cross is restored to me."

From that day no one ever again dared to plead with King Louis to give up the crusade.

Some of Louis's knights also took the Cross, but the number was not large enough to content the king, and he determined that many more should follow him to Palestine. If others would not take it of their own will, then they must be persuaded by one means or another.

Grave as King Louis was, I think he must have smiled to himself as he planned to entrap his laggard knights.

It was the custom in those days for each courtier to receive a new cloak at Christmastide. On Christmas Eve, therefore, the king bade them be present next morning at early mass.

As each knight entered the chapel on Christmas morning, his new cloak was thrown around his shoulders by one of the king's officers.

There was nothing unusual in this, and it was only when the service was over, and the knights came out of the dimly lighted chapel into the dawning light of day, that each saw on the new cloak of his neighbor the Cross, the sign of the Holy War.

"At first the knights laughed, seeing that their lord king had taken them piously, preaching by deeds not words," but they soon grew grave, knowing well that they could not tear off the sacred sign which the king had fastened to their cloaks. They must even follow him to the Holy Land.

CHAPTER XXI

ST. LOUIS IS TAKEN PRISONER

In the summer of 1248 Louis unfurled the Oriflamme, gathered together his army, and set sail for the east.

Queen Blanche was to rule the country in her son's absence.

"Most sweet, fair son," she said as she bade him farewell, "fair, tender son, I shall never see thee more, full well my heart assures me." Queen Margaret sailed with Louis, for she had refused to be parted from her dear lord.

When Richard the Lion-hearted left Jerusalem, the city, you remember, was in the hands of the Sultan of Egypt.

It was still in the hands of a Sultan of Egypt, though the one with whom Richard made a truce must long have passed away.

King Louis therefore determined to go, not to Jerusalem, but to Egypt, to attack the sultan where he was strongest. Then after crushing his power in Egypt, he hoped to go on to Palestine.

After spending nearly eight months at Cyprus, and laying in a supply of provisions, the French ships sailed to Damietta, a town at the mouth of the Nile.

In June, 1249, the crusaders at length caught sight of the coast of Egypt. There before them, too, was the town of Damietta. But between them and the town, drawn up on the beach, were the sultan's armies. He had heard that the crusaders were approaching, and he was ready to receive them.

The king was in the foremost ship, from whose prow waved

the Oriflamme. As the boat neared the shore Louis leaped into the sea, though it reached to his shoulder, and holding his shield high in one hand, his lance in the other, he struggled to the shore, followed by his whole army.

Only one ship lay out at sea. In it was Queen Margaret, eagerly watching how the battle would go, anxiously praying that her lord might be safe.

Followed by his army the king dashed upon the sultan's troops, and drove them back upon the town of Damietta. The Saracens were without a leader, for the sultan was ill. A panic seized them and they fled, leaving Damietta with its strong walls and stores of provisions in the hands of the crusaders. Queen Margaret then came with her ladies and her guard to join the king, and to hold her court in the conquered town.

And now Louis, instead of marching on, lingered at Damietta, while the waters of the Nile rose and overflowed its banks, as it does each year. For five weary months it was impossible for the army to leave the town.

While the crusaders were shut up in Damietta, the sultan had recovered from his illness, and was at a town called Mansourah, strengthening the walls of the city against the cruasders.

When the waters of the Nile had gone down, the crusading army at length set out on their march to Cairo, the capital of Egypt. To reach Cairo they must pass the town of Mansourah, where the sultan awaited them.

After a difficult march the army approached the city, only to find that a stream of water separated them from their enemies. Before they could cross they must build a causeway over which to pass and attack the Saracens. But while the crusaders tried to build the causeway, the Saracens were attacking them from the walls and towers of Mansourah, and also sallying out and destroying their work. King Louis saw that it would be impossible ever to finish the causeway. As he gave the order for the soldiers

to withdraw from their difficult task, an Egyptian stole into the camp and offered to show the crusaders a ford, if they would give him money as a reward.

The offer was accepted, Robert, Count of Artois, the king's brother, begging to be allowed to pass over first with his men. He promised to guard the ford on the farther side until the whole army had crossed.

But having crossed the ford, the count saw a band of Saracens ready to flee at his approach. At the sight he forgot his promise to guard the ford, stuck spurs to his horse, and, followed by his men, pursued the enemy into the town of Mansourah.

Robert thought the town was his. But he was yet to pay for his rash deed. It was only a small part of the sultan's army that had fled before the count and his followers. The other now came up, surrounded the town, and before Robert was aware, he and his men were fighting for their lives in the place they thought they had taken as easily as they took Damietta.

The king's brother was slain, and three hundred of his knights also perished within the walls of Mansourah.

Meanwhile Louis with the main body of his army had crossed the ford, to find the other bank unguarded by his brother Robert. The enemy fell upon them from every side, while the French army, unable to keep its ranks, fought in small bands. Louis's orders were unheard in the clashing of arms and dire confusion that had overtaken the army. The king himself fought as only a gallant knight could fight, always at the point of danger.

Joinville, a famous chronicler of the times, says, "Never have I seen a knight of so great worth; he towered above all his battle by the head and shoulders."

At one time it seemed that Louis would be taken prisoner. Dashing upon the enemy with only a small bodyguard, in his haste he outstripped his men, and found himself alone in the midst of six fierce Saracens. But Louis did

not know what fear meant. He fought so bravely that the six fierce Saracens found it impossible to take him, and before long his bodyguard rode up and rescued their king from his perilous position.

One charge more, one wild determined charge, and the French had won the day, but at terrible cost, for many men were slain, many wounded.

Three days later the Saracens returned in great force, and attacked the king's camp. Again the French were victorious, but there was scarcely a knight that was not wounded, while the numbers of the slain were not to be counted.

Instead of now retreating to Damietta, the king lingered on the battlefield until the army had buried its dead. Meanwhile, fever broke out in the camp, and while the French let the weeks slip by, the enemy watched the river, so that it was wellnigh impossible for Louis to get provisions for his army.

During these sad days the king proved utterly unselfish. No one ever heard him complain, no one ever saw him provide for his own comfort. Though ill himself, he went in and out of the camp among his fever-stricken soldiers, tending them with his own hands, speaking so kindly to them that they were content to die were he but by their side.

One of his own servants, as he lay dying, was heard to murmur, "I am waiting for my lord, our saintly king, to come. I will not depart this life until I have seen him and spoken to him, and then will I die."

After six weeks had passed, the king gave the order to retreat to Damietta. The ships were prepared to receive the sick and wounded, but Louis himself, though now attacked by fever, refused to go on board. "Please God, I will rather die than desert my people," said Louis the Saint, and he placed himself in the rearguard of his army.

The king was too ill to bear the weight of his armor, or to ride his battle-horse, so his servants helped him to mount a little Arab steed covered with silken trappings. The retreat began, but before they had gone far the king grew worse. He could no longer ride the little Arab steed. His knights carried him to an Egyptian house, and sought to guard him from the enemy. But the Saracens burst into the house, and the brave, unselfish king was captured, while the whole army was either slain or taken captive.

Louis was thrown into prison, and from the window he could see his soldiers as they were led out one by one, and asked if they would give up their faith in Christ and become followers of the prophet Mahomet. If they refused they were slain before the eyes of their king, and this to Louis was the hardest part of his captivity.

But he was so fearless, so patient, never flinching even when the sultan threatened to torture him, answering only, "I am your prisoner, you can do with me what you will," that his captor was touched, and offered to give him up on the payment of a heavy ransom. Unselfish as ever, Louis refused to be set free unless the soldiers who still remained in prison were also allowed to return to France.

At length terms were arranged. Damietta was given up as a ransom for the king, an enormous sum of money was paid to the sultan that the French soldiers might also be set free, and a truce was made for ten years.

Then Louis being free went back to Damietta, where Queen Margaret awaited her lord. Her courage alone had kept the soldiers, who held the town, from forsaking their posts when the king was taken prisoner. While the queen had looked with tear-stained eyes for Louis's return a little son was born, whom she named John Tristan, in memory of her sorrow. For Tristan comes from the French word *triste,* which is the same as our word "sad."

The king was now urged by his knights to go home to France, but bidding those return who wished, Louis him-

self set out for Palestine. Here he labored for four years, setting free the Christians who had been taken captive by the Turks, and strengthening the towns which were still Christian strongholds.

Then, in 1253, Louis heard that his mother, Queen Blanche, had died, and he knew that it was his duty to go home. In September 1254, six years from the time he had set out, the king was once again in his own country. The joy of his people knew no bounds. They lighted bonfires, they danced, they sang in the streets to show their delight, until at length the good king, "who was pained to see the expense, the dances, and the vanities indulged in . . . put a stop to them."

For sixteen years King Louis stayed at home, ruling his realm so wisely that his people loved him more and more. The poor, the sick, the sad, were his special care. Every day, in whatever town the king might be, six score, that is, one hundred and twenty poor people, were fed at his table. And often the good king was to be seen cutting bread, pouring out wine, and himself giving food and drink to the folk who gathered around his palace doors.

But alas! neither Louis's love for his people, nor theirs for him, could keep the king at home. The Cross of the crusader was still fastened to his cloak, nay more, it was branded on his heart.

In the spring of 1270 the king determined to go on another crusade.

Joinville tells us that when Louis set out he was so weak that he was able neither to ride nor walk. The chronicler himself sometimes carried the king in his arms from one place to another, while at other times he was placed in a litter. It was little wonder that the people mourned when they heard of the new crusade. They feared that never more would they see their beloved king.

With his three sons and his army, Louis sailed this time for Africa, landing at Tunis, under the rays of a burning

'THE GOOD KING WAS TO BE SEEN GIVING FOOD AND DRINK TO THE FOLK.'

sun. Here he halted for reinforcements, which Charles of Anjou, his brother, had promised to bring.

While the crusaders waited, fever and disease attacked the army. The king himself, already weak, was smitten with fever.

In his illness Louis did not forget his people. Calling his eldest son Philip to his side, he said, "Fair son, I pray thee win the love of the people of thy kingdom. For truly I would rather that a Scot should come out of Scotland and rule the people well and justly, than that thou shouldest govern them ill-advisedly."

Then, lying back in bed, he murmured, "Fair Sir God, have mercy on this people that bideth here, and bring them back to their own land."

The day before he died he bade his knights lay him on a bed of ashes, and thus "this most loyal man" passed away.

St. Louis's body was brought to a church in Paris which he himself had built, and his tomb is still to be seen in this church, which is called Saint Chapelle.

Louis was the last of the heroes of the crusades. After his death the Christians were gradually driven out of Palestine, and the land was then left in the hands of the Saracens.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SICILIAN VESPERS

PHILIP, St. Louis's eldest son, stayed at Tunis for about two months after his father's death. He then made peace with the Turks and set sail for France, taking with him the body of the dead king. From the beginning it was a sad voyage. How could it be otherwise when King Louis was dead?

Before the fleet had been long at sea, a great storm arose and destroyed a large number of the ships. Then Philip's wife, who had been thrown from a horse shortly before, fell ill and died. It was indeed a sad company of crusaders which at length in 1271 reached France.

Philip III. was named the Bold. It is said that he gained the name when he was a child. For one day, seeing his mother, Queen Margaret, shrink back at the sight of some fierce-looking Saracens, the little prince had drawn himself up, saying bravely, "I am not at all afraid." The king would scarcely have been called the Bold from his deeds after he became a man.

King Philip was neither wise nor strong. His uncle, Charles of Anjou, who was restless and ambitious, attracted more interest and attention than his quiet nephew.

While Charles was ruling over Naples and Sicily, and proving himself more powerful than any prince in Italy, Philip was living quietly at home, ruled by his favorite, Peter de la Brosse.

Peter had once been the king's barber, but Philip had made him a noble. The more powerful he became, the more the nobles hated him.

The favorite was always to be seen at the king's councils. The barons wished he were anywhere but there, for they knew that if Peter did not approve, their schemes would soon be set aside and forgotten.

The king, you remember, had lost his wife on the way home from Tunis. Four years later Philip had married again, and the new queen, Mary of Brabant, having great influence over the king, did all she could to lessen the power of the favorite, for she hated Peter as much as did the nobles.

Peter, on his side, had no love for the queen. When Philip's eldest son, the queen's step-son, took ill and died, the favorite dared to whisper to the king that Queen Mary had poisoned the prince, that her own child might in time wear the crown of France.

At first the king listened to Peter, but he was soon ashamed that he had done so, for he knew his wife would not do so cruel a deed.

The queen herself did not rest until the favorite was punished. She and the barons watched Peter closely, and at length accused him of treason. After that even the king could not save him. Peter was condemned as a traitor and hanged. The people were not pleased at the fate of the favorite, for he had been one of themselves; but the nobles, so an old chronicler says, "took pleasure in witnessing his execution."

Charles of Anjou, the king's uncle, was, as I told you, King of Naples and Sicily. He was harsh and proud, "neither smiling nor speaking much," and the gay Sicilian people, as well as those who dwelt in Naples, hated their French king and his followers. At length they determined, whenever an opportunity came, to turn Charles and the French out of their country.

Easter, 1282, dawned, while the anger of the Sicilians was still smoldering. The trees were already green, the air warm, as the bells rang that Easter day in the town of Palermo for vespers or evening prayer.

The Sicilians, clad in their holiday gowns, trooped to the service.

Among the crowd were French soldiers, whom Charles had commanded to keep order. But instead of doing their duty, the soldiers behaved so rudely to the people that the Sicilians bade them begone.

"These Sicilians must carry arms or they would not dare to speak so insolently," said the soldiers one to another, and they began to search the peasants. One beautiful maiden they handled so roughly that she fainted. Quick as thought her lover drew his dagger and stabbed the French soldier to the heart.

This was the opportunity for which the Sicilians were waiting. At once a cry arose, "Death, death to the French!" and in a transport of fury the Sicilians fell upon the soldiers, and not one escaped alive. Then the crowd, too maddened with rage to know what it was doing, stormed the houses in Palermo, and killed all who were not Italians.

Throughout the island the rebellion spread, and every Frenchman that was found was put to death. We still shudder as we read of the "Sicilian Vespers," for so the massacre was called, because it began as the vesper bells rang for evening prayer.

When Charles of Anjou, who had been in Naples, heard what had happened, his anger knew no bounds. With a large force he at once set out to punish the Sicilians.

They, knowing themselves defenseless against Charles, offered the crown of Sicily to Pedro, King of Aragon, and begged him to come to their help. Pedro's own kingdom of Aragon was in the north of Spain.

Pedro accepted the crown which the Sicilians offered him, and at once sent ambassadors to Charles bidding him withdraw his troops from Sicily.

In his rage Charles gnawed the top of his scepter; nevertheless, he withdrew to Naples, vowing to return to take vengeance on his foes.

Meanwhile, Pedro defeated the French fleet, and took Charles's son prisoner. Rage and sorrow together threw Charles of Anjou into a fever from which he never recovered. He died in 1285.

When Philip the Bold heard that his uncle was dead, he determined to carry on the war with Pedro. He therefore attacked him in his own kingdom of Aragon.

But the town Philip besieged was hard to take, and while the king waited with his army beneath its walls, his fleet, with provisions for the army, was destroyed. His soldiers, too, were already suffering terribly from the heat, so Philip determined to go back to France.

With his army worn out by fever and want of food, it was no easy matter to recross the Pyrenees. As the soldiers struggled homewards, the king heard that the remnant of his fleet had been destroyed. Disappointed and ashamed, Philip fell sick and died before he reached France.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE BATTLE OF THE SPURS

PHILIP the Bold was succeeded in 1285 by his son Philip the Fair. "This king," says an old chronicler, was "simple and sage, and spake but little; proud was he as a lion when he looked on men." But as you read about Philip IV., called the Fair, you will learn more about him than the old writer tells. You will find that Philip was greedy for wealth, greedy for power, and to get either he would do bad and cruel deeds. If he saw that he could not get his own way by force, he was crafty enough to gain it by soft words and pleasant ways.

The king loved money, and Flanders was one of the richest countries in Europe.

Guy de Dampierre, Count of Flanders, was a vassal of the French king. He was a brave man, bent on marrying his daughters to great princes, so that he himself might become of more importance.

When Philip the Fair discovered that Count Guy was secretly trying to arrange with Edward I., King of England, that his daughter Philippa should marry the heir to the English throne, he was very angry. He at once invited Guy to Paris, and the count did not dare to refuse. Being a brave man, Guy, who probably knew why he had been summoned to the capital, no sooner came into the king's presence than he told that his daughter Philippa was soon to marry Prince Edward of England.

As England and France were often at war, the count hastened to add that, in spite of the new tie with England,

he would always serve King Philip loyally, "as every good and true man should serve his lord."

"In God's name, Sir Count," said the angry king, "this thing will never do; you have made alliance with my foe without my wit (knowledge), wherefore you shall abide with me." And without more ado Philip ordered Count Guy and his two sons, who were with him, to be put in the tower of the Louvre. The Louvre, you remember, was a prison as well as a palace.

For six months the king kept his prisoners, and then set them free only on condition that Philippa should stay in France as a hostage for her father's good conduct.

But at the end of two years the count threw off his allegiance to the French king in these bold words: "Every one doth know in how many ways the King of France hath misbehaved toward God and justice. Such is his might and his pride that he doth acknowledge naught above himself, and he hath brought us to the necessity of seeking allies who may be able to defend and protect us."

At the same time Guy made no secret of the treaty he had concluded with Edward I., by which his daughter Isabel should marry the young English prince, since Philippa was still a prisoner in the Louvre.

After such defiance from the count, it was but natural that Philip should declare war upon Flanders.

A French army was soon assembled, and before the English had arrived to help Count Guy, Philip had marched into Flanders, taken the town of Lille, and won a great victory.

For two years after this there was a truce between the two countries. As soon as it ended, Philip sent his brother Charles, Count of Valois, into Flanders at the head of a powerful army.

When the Count of Valois reached Ghent, however, no battle was fought. For the magistrates came willingly to offer the keys of the city to the French prince.

Perhaps you wonder how the magistrates came to act as traitors to their country.

An old chronicler tells us all about it. "The burghers of the town of Flanders," he writes, "were all bribed by gifts or promises from the King of France, who would never have dared to invade the frontiers had they been faithful to their count."

Guy de Dampierre saw that his cause was lost, and surrendered to the Count de Valois, with his two sons and those knights who had not forsaken him.

Charles urged Guy to go to Paris and trust Philip to be merciful. So Guy set out for the capital, and when he drew near to the palace he dismounted and walked humbly into the king's presence, as befitted one who had come to sue for mercy.

But Philip had no mercy. "I desire no peace with you," he said haughtily, as Count Guy urged his suit, and he sent the count to prison. Then at length he was free to do what for years he had wished. He proclaimed that Guy de Dampierre having forforfeited his right to Flanders, the country now belonged to the crown of France.

In the following year, 1301, Philip thought it would be well to pay a visit to the province he had made his own. So with the queen, her ladies, and a brilliant train of courtiers, Philip the Fair set out for Flanders.

At Bruges the town was brightly decorated to receive the royal visitors. Platforms were placed in the square of the town, hung with rich tapestries. Here the ladies of Bruges were seated, wearing their most precious jewels, their most gorgeous robes.

The Queen of France looked with some displeasure at these richly dressed dames, with some envy at their valuable jewels. Turning to the king she said, "There is none but queens to be seen in Bruges; I had thought that there was none but I had a right to royal state."

But though the rich ladies and nobles were pleased

thus gayly to welcome their new lord, the people would have nothing to do with their conqueror. They refused to put on holiday clothes, to play games, as usually they were quick to do, but went about the streets silent and with sullen faces. Philip had already proved himself a hard master. Not only the inhabitants of Bruges, but the people all over Flanders were beginning to groan under the taxes imposed on them by the King of France.

In March 1302 the Flemings resolved to bear Philip's exactions no longer. Bruges set the example. In the dead of night the bells rang out from every belfry in the town, the burghers rose up as one man, and massacred all the French who were in the city. This was the beginning of a fierce struggle between the French and the Flemings.

The tidings of the massacre no sooner reached Paris than the barons set out with an army to punish the burghers. They met the Flemish force, which had taken up its position behind a deep and narrow canal, near a town called Courtrai, in July 1302.

The French knights feared the burghers of Flanders not at all. Recklessly they dashed forward, putting spurs to their horses so that a cloud of dust enveloped them. On they dashed, the gallant knights of France, nor saw amid the dust the smooth water of the canal. Into the water, before they were aware of it, fell the foremost knights, those behind pressing those in front, until the army was floundering in the muddy water.

Then the Flemish fell upon the French, the rearguard turning to run for their lives. Robert, Count of Artois, the leader of the French army, tried to rally his men in vain. As he fell wounded to the ground he cried, "I yield me! I yield me!" but the Flemish pretended that they did not understand his language, and put him to death.

On the battlefield lay twelve or fifteen thousand soldiers, and among them were the leaders of the French army. The Flemish had won the battle of Courtrai. From the

towers of a monastery not far from the town the monks watched the battle. "We could see the French flying," wrote the abbot, "over the roads, across the fields, and through hedges, in such numbers that the sight must have been seen to be believed. There were in the outskirts of our town, and in the neighboring villages, so vast a multitude of knights and men-at-arms tormented with hunger, that it was a matter horrible to see. They gave their arms to get bread."

When all was over, the victors took from the dead bodies of the French knights four thousand or even a greater number of gilt spurs, and hung them as a trophy of war in the cathedral of Courtrai. And ever since this hard-won field has been called the "Battle of the Spurs."

Two years afterwards Philip defeated the Flemish fleet. Then another battle was fought, but both sides claimed the victory. Philip saw that he need never expect to crush these obstinate burghers, so he offered to make peace with them. From that time to the end of his reign treaties were continually being made and broken and remade between France and Flanders.

CHAPTER XXIV

POPE BONIFACE TAKEN PRISONER

You have heard how often the kings of France were at war with the nobles, and how gradually their power was reduced while that of the king increased. Philip IV. struggled, not against the nobles, but against the Church.

Wealthy persons had been used, when they were dying, to leave all their lands and riches to the Church, but Philip forbade them to give her more than a certain portion of their wealth or property. He also refused to let any of the clergy sit in the law courts. Nor was this all. Being in need of money, the king determined that the clergy should be taxed, a thing unheard of until now.

Boniface VIII., who was Pope at this time, was very angry when he heard that the King of France had dared to tax the clergy. He at once wrote to Philip, saying that the priests were his subjects and could not be taxed without his permission. If the king would not "amend these matters of his own good will," the Pope threatened to correct Philip more severely.

Philip could ill brook the Pope's reproof. He answered that the King of France could tax whom he would in his own realm, and had done so before ever a Pope had ruled at Rome.

The Pope with some sharpness retorted that if the king did not humble himself, and that speedily, he, Boniface, would excommunicate him; nay, he would do more, he would even depose him.

As Philip did not submit, a Bull of Excommunication was actually sent to France. The decree was called a Bull from the golden *bulla* or ball to which the Pope's seal was attached. But the bearer of the Bull was thrown into prison when he reached France, and Philip proceeded to attack the Pope.

The French king had in Italy at this time a captain named Nogaret. He, by Philip's orders, joined an Italian prince called Colonna, who for long had had a family feud with the Pope.

Nogaret and Colonna then hired soldiers and set out to seek the Pope, who was staying in a palace in the town of Anagni.

In September the soldiers, led by Nogaret and Colonna, entered the town, the gates being flung wide for them to enter, for Nogaret had bribed the captain of Anagni with gold.

Boniface was an old man, over seventy years of age, but when he heard that his enemies were near, he threw over his shoulders the cloak of St. Peter, put the crown that had belonged to him as Pope upon his head, and, taking the Cross in his hands, awaited the soldiers without a trace of fear. As they entered the palace he said to his enemies, "Here is my neck and here is my head!"

Colonna would fain have killed the old man on the spot, and when Nogaret interfered, the Italian prince is said to have struck Boniface with his mailed hand, until the blood streamed down his face.

The soldiers then sent the Pope's attendants away, placed the old man on a horse, with his face to the tail, and led him away to prison.

For two days Boniface dared neither to eat nor drink, lest his enemies should poison him. On the third day the people of Anagni could no longer bear to think of their Pope in prison. Forgetting their fear of the French, they rose and drove Nogaret's soldiers out of the town,

and set Pope Boniface free. Then in triumph they led him back to his palace, and because he was faint with fasting, they fed him with bread and gave him wine to drink.

When the Romans heard how the Pope had been treated, they sent their soldiers to bring him back to Rome. But soon after the old man, worn out by all that he had suffered, took ill and died. From that time the worldly power of the Pope was broken.

In the following year, 1304, Philip was forced to recognize the independence of Flanders, and Count Guy's eldest son came to do homage to the French king as his lord. Save for two or three frontier towns, Flanders no longer belonged to the kingdom of France.

The war had emptied Philip's treasury. To fill it Philip did two cruel deeds. The Jews in France were known to be wealthy. The king accused them of horrible crimes, such as using evil spells and poisoning wells of water. Then he banished them from the land, and himself took possession of all their riches.

Not satisfied with this, Philip next attacked the Knights Templar, who were also known to be rich and to possess much property.

Long before this time, in 1119, nine knights had gone to live in a house near the Temple at Jerusalem. They called themselves its Knights Defenders, and were the beginning of the order of the Knights Templar.

At first these knights lived simple lives, under the control of a Grand Master, whose power was supreme. Over their armor the Templars wore a white cloak, with a red cross fastened to it on the left side, over the heart. They were half soldiers, half monks, living on alms, and possessing neither lands nor money, and they were among the bravest of those who fought in the crusades to recover the Holy Sepulcher from the Infidels.

Gradually, when the crusades were ended, the Knights

Templar forgot their vow of poverty. They grew rich and powerful, and owned lands and property in both France and England.

In Paris they built the Temple, which was a strong fortress close to the Louvre, while in London the Temple Church was founded, and took its name from these knights of long ago.

Dark tales began to be told of the order in the reign of Philip IV. People believed that its members trampled and spat on the crucifix. They believed that the knights did many other horrible deeds, and they knew that they were idle and proud.

These tales gave Philip the chance he wished, and in 1307 he suddenly ordered all the Templars in France to be thrown into prison, while he seized their wealth to fill his treasury, just as he had seized the Jews' wealth when he banished them from the country.

Many of the knights were tortured and put to death, while the Grand Master and one other were taken to a little island on the Seine. There, at the hour when the vesper bell called to evening prayer, they were tied to a stake and burned to death.

Philip thought nothing of the sufferings he had inflicted on these knights, but the nation was growing angry with their king's cruelty.

The nobles and burghers leagued themselves together, and presented Philip with a petition, begging him to relax his taxes and oppressions. At the head of those who signed this paper was the name of Joinville, the chronicler of St. Louis's time, who was now almost a hundred years old. Philip was as much surprised as angry when he received the petition. Shortly afterwards, as he was out hunting, he was wounded by a wild boar. From this wound he never recovered, dying in November 1314, at the age of forty-six.

France had suffered too much under Philip's reign to be sorry when she heard of his death.

"God forgive him his sins," says a writer of his day, "for in the time of his reign great loss came to France, and there was small regret for him."

CHAPTER XXV

THE SALIC LAW

PHILIP IV. left three sons, Louis, Philip, and Charles, who each in turn became king.

Louis X., the new king, was named the Quarrelsome, and though he was twenty-five years old he was neither willing nor able to reign. He left the care of his realm to his uncle, Charles of Valois, while he idled his time playing games or taking part in tournaments.

Charles was an ambitious prince, and the first use he made of his power was to take vengeance on Marigni, a minister of Philip IV., who was sometimes called "the other king," and who had always stood in Charles's way.

One day, when the young king had forsaken his games and was present at a meeting of his council, he asked how, during his father's reign, a certain large sum of money had been spent.

"Sire," answered Charles de Valois, "it is for Marigni to render an account. It was he who had charge of everything."

"I am quite ready," said Marigni.

"This moment then," cried Prince Charles.

"Most willingly, my lord; I gave a portion to you," said Marigni.

"You lie!" shouted Charles.

"Nay, you!" retorted the minister.

Charles, in spite of the presence of the king, was in such a rage that he drew his sword, and Marigni would have

unsheathed his, had not other members of the council interfered.

But Marigni, by his rash words, had sealed his fate. Charles de Valois could not rest until his enemy was punished.

The minister was seized, condemned to death without a fair trial, and hanged on a scaffold which he had himself erected. Marigni walked bravely to the place of execution, saying to the people who looked on, "Good folk, pray for me."

King Louis had tried in vain to have the fallen minister's sentence changed into banishment; but the nobles, led by Charles de Valois, paid no heed to the king's wish. Again and again they wrested from the feeble hands of their king privileges and powers which Philip had denied them. At length even Louis X. grew alarmed. He would soon, he felt, be a king only in name.

Yet, in spite of the king's weakness, we find that in 1315 he ordered that all the slaves in the land should be set free on paying a certain sum of money. It was not so much to free the slaves as to procure money that Louis did this, yet it was a great and just act. The slaves, however, had not much money, and what they had they had earned with such difficulty that, rather than part with it, they were willing to remain slaves.

Louis then made a law compelling every slave to buy his freedom, and in this way the money he needed flowed into his treasury. But though the slaves were now free men, the nobles did not cease to oppress them, and it was many long years before they were treated otherwise than as slaves.

War with Flanders had again broken out, and Louis, now having money for a campaign, set out with an army and reached Lys. Here, however, he found that heavy rains had made the roads almost impassable. Food for the army also began to run short, so without more ado Louis

returned to France, "not without much inconvenience and some disgrace."

During the last two years of Louis's reign the people of France suffered much from famine and poverty. But the king, caring little for their suffering, played tennis, and forgot all about his starving subjects.

One day as he played Louis became so hot that he slipped away to a cold cellar and "drank wine without stint." This was the cause of the illness from which he died.

Louis, although he had no son to succeed to the throne, left behind him a daughter, named Jeanne. But the king's brother, Philip, paying no heed to the claims of his niece, hastened to Rheims, and was crowned King of France.

When he returned to Paris the new king, Philip V., called the Long, summoned the lords and citizens, and declared to them that no woman could succeed to the French throne.

The lawyers thought that they would strengthen the king's words if they could find in their ancient law books that women had never been allowed to rule in France. So they searched the old law books, and among those belonging to the Salian Franks, from which tribe Clovis, their first king, had sprung, they found what they wished. For in these ancient books they read that "no part or heritage of Salic land can fall to a woman." As a queen must be able to own land, it was plainly impossible for a woman to reign in France. Thus strangely the new law which Philip the Long made to keep his niece Jeanne from seizing the crown was confirmed by the ancient law books. From that time the law forbidding women to rule in France was known as the Salic Law.

In 1322 Philip died, and his younger brother Charles IV., called the Fair, became king.

Philip the Long's children were all girls. It may be that if he had known that he would have no son to follow him he would have been less quick to declare that no woman

could rule in France, and the lawyers might never have looked for the old Salian law books. Be that as it may, Philip had prevented any of his four daughters from ever becoming Queen of France.

Charles the Fair was the last of the Capetian kings, for he left no son to carry on his race.

"And thus, in less than thirteen years, perished all the noble and fair lineage of the Fair king, whereat all marveled much; but God knoweth the cause thereof, not me."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE BATTLE OF SLUYS

Two princes now laid claim to the throne. One was Philip, Count of Valois, a cousin of the last three kings; the other was Edward III. of England, whose mother, Isabella, was the daughter of Philip IV. and sister of Charles IV. who had just died.

When the barons and citizens of France met together to choose their new sovereign, they soon determined that Philip of Valois should be their king. For Philip was a Frenchman, while Edward was English; moreover, Philip was a great baron, and the nobles hoped to win his goodwill by raising him to the throne.

In this, however, they were doomed to disappointment, for Philip proved ungrateful and cruel. No sooner was he crowned than he began to put down the nobles, whose power he feared might clash with his own. For though Philip was called king, he owned no more land and possessed little more power than some of his subjects.

The new king, Philip VI., was called the Fortunate, which seems strange, for his reign was full of misfortunes.

Being fond of show, Philip was crowned with more than usual magnificence at Rheims, and for many days after the coronation the court was gay with dances and tournaments.

The merriment of the court was, however, interrupted by his cousin Count Louis of Flanders, who begged the king to come to his help, for the Flemings had rebelled against him.

Philip, thinking a fine army and the glory of winning battles a better entertainment than were the gayeties of the court, readily promised to give Louis his help.

It was easy to raise an army, for the barons were eager to conquer and plunder the obstinate burghers of Flanders, who were known to be wealthy.

So "with the fairest and greatest host in the world," Philip VI. marched into Flanders and encamped at the foot of a hill called Cassel.

The Flemings had encamped on the top of the hill, and were eager to fight. Their captain, however, wished first to find out the strength of the enemy. Disguising himself as a fish merchant, he clambered down the hill and boldly entered the French camp. While selling his goods he saw that the French knights had taken off their armor, and were playing at chess or "strolling from tent to tent in their fine robes, in search of amusement," while the king was sitting at supper, as undisturbed as though he were in the midst of his gay court at Paris.

As quickly as he dared the fish merchant made his way out of the French camp, and hastening back to the Flemings, told them that now was the time to take the French by surprise.

Almost at once three columns of soldiers crept silently down the hill, and attacked the French camp, Philip himself being nearly captured.

In spite of their surprise the French quickly rallied, and fought so bravely that the Flemish captain as well as most of his men were slain.

This defeat ended the rebellion in Flanders. The Flemings submitted to Count Louis, and Philip disbanded his army and returned in triumph to Paris.

The king was proud of his success, and perhaps it was partly in pride that he now summoned Edward III. of England to come to do homage to him for the duchy of Guienne.

Edward came with his barons, and met Philip and his peers in the church of Amiens.

Froissart, a chronicler who tells us much about these days, says that Edward did homage to Philip "only with mouth and word," refusing to put his hands into the hands of the French king, as was the custom at such a ceremony. By so doing Edward believed he left himself free to claim the crown of France.

Philip, guessing that Edward hoped some day to put forward his claim to the French crown, set himself to harass his rival in every possible way.

He did all he could to spoil the English trade with Flanders; he attempted to take from the English king his duchy of Guienne; and, when Edward went to war with Scotland, he helped and encouraged Robert the Bruce to defy his rival.

Edward had little time to think of Philip until his war with Scotland was ended. Then he determined to punish the French king for the injuries he had done him by laying claim to the crown of France.

This, then, was the beginning of the long struggle between France and England known as the Hundred Years' War, because it lasted all those years, with, however, times of peace in between.

In 1337 Edward III. declared war against the French king; the Flemings, encouraged by Jacob van Artevelde, a rich brewer, being his allies. Three years later the first great battle of the Hundred Years' War took place at sea, the French fleet being near the seaport of Sluys, a town in Flanders. Before this the fleet had cruised from time to time in the Channel, and sailed into English ports. One Sunday morning, while the people were at church, the French had even sailed up to Southampton, and sacked and burned the town.

Then at length, in June 1340, Edward was ready to avenge this and other hostile acts. He sailed from London

with a large fleet, on board of which were England's bravest soldiers.

As they drew near to Sluys the English saw the masts of the French fleet, so many in number that they looked "thick as a forest before them." The *Christopher,* too, their own English ship which the French had captured a year before, was there. You can imagine how angry the English soldiers and sailors felt when they saw their own good vessel in the van or front of the enemy's fleet. They made up their minds that, at all costs, they would again gain possession of the *Christopher.*

Edward was well pleased when he saw his foes. "For many a long day," said he, "I desired to fight those fellows, and now we will fight them, please God and St. George."

The sun was shining directly upon the English fleet as it approached Sluys. Edward, seeing this, ordered the sails to be lowered and the ships to be turned so that the sun would be behind them.

The French watched the great ships as they changed their position, and soon they cried, "They are turning tail, they are not men enough to fight us." But in that they were mistaken. For the English bore down upon them, and, grappling their ships together with hooks and chains, fought on deck with their battle-axes and swords as though they were on land.

You may be sure that the English did not forget to attack the *Christopher,* and before long it was taken, manned once again with English archers, and working deadly havoc among the French.

The battle was fierce and long, lasting from eight in the morning until five in the afternoon. As the day wore on the French were pushed back upon Sluys, and there the Flemings fell upon them; and many thousands, some say thirty thousand, were slain, or, jumping into the sea to save themselves from the enemy, were drowned.

By afternoon the great sea-battle was over, and the English had won the day.

Philip was at Paris when tidings from Sluys reached the capital. But no one dared to tell the king how the day had gone. Yet he must be told.

At length the court fool, a jester who might say what he pleased, cried out, "The English are great cowards."

"Why do you say so?" asked the king.

"Because they lacked courage to jump into the sea at Sluys as the French did," answered the fool.

There was no need to say more. Philip understood that the English had beaten him, and his anger was terrible. Even the fool was quick to flee from his master's presence.

Soon after this great defeat a truce was arranged between France and England, and King Edward went back to his own country.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE BATTLE OF CRÉCY

In July 1346, the truce being over, King Edward sailed for Normandy, taking with him a large army and his eldest son, the Prince of Wales.

Having landed, Edward marched through the country, taking town after town. St. Cloud, the town named, you remember, after a hapless little prince, was burned, and the English troops advanced almost to the gates of Paris.

Philip at once prepared to join his army at St. Denis. The old blind King of Bohemia had come with his son Charles and his knights to help the French king, and was awaiting him there, as was also a band of archers from Italy, who had been paid to fight for the French army.

The citizens of Paris were alarmed by the approach of Edward's troops, and begged the king not to leave them.

"My good people," answered Philip, "have ye no fear; the English shall come no nigher to you; I am away to St. Denis to my men-at-arms, for I mean to ride against these English and fight them in such fashion as I may."

So Philip joined his troops and set out in pursuit of the English, who had now turned northwards and were marching toward the river Somme. The French were about a day's journey behind, but they hoped to overtake them at the river, for they knew that Philip had ordered all the bridges to be either broken down or fortified.

When Edward heard from his captains that it was impossible for the army to cross the river, he was, says Froissart the chronicler, "not more joyous or less pensive,

and began to fall into a great melancholy." For well he knew that the enemy was not far behind.

But Philip was triumphant. He believed that the English were already in his power. He would starve them there between the river and the sea, or force them to fight against his army, which was larger and stronger than theirs.

Just when the English were most despondent, however, a ford was discovered. For King Edward had himself sent for some French prisoners, promising them freedom and gold if they would tell him a spot where the army might safely cross the river.

And one prisoner proved a traitor, for he led the English to the point where the Somme enters the sea. Here at low tide it was easy to cross, so the English bestirred themselves, and as the tide was ebbing they plunged into the water.

Guarding the opposite bank, by Philip's orders, was a knight, Sir Godemars de Foy, with about twelve thousand men. They also leaped into the river, and meeting the English in the middle of the stream they did their utmost to bar the passage. Many, both French and English, were drowned or slain.

But the English archers, from the farther side, never ceased to speed their arrows among the enemy, until at length the French began to yield, and, in spite of all Sir Godemars could do, to turn and run. They were pursued by the English, who overtook and scattered them, and thus Edward and his army were soon safe on the other side of the river.

By this time the tide had again begun to rise, and Philip, coming up, found it impossible to follow the enemy, though his men killed some of the rearguard who had lingered behind.

Edward now marched on until he reached a small village called Crécy. Here, on rising ground, on August 26, 1346, the army took up its position.

The English were in three divisions. In the van or forefront was the king's young son, the Prince of Wales, who was only seventeen years of age. As the armor he wore was always black, he was called the Black Prince. On the field of Crécy the young prince was to win his spurs.

King Edward, having divided his army, mounted upon a pony, and with a white staff in his hand he rode from rank to rank, bidding his men fight bravely for the honor of their country.

Froissart tells us that some of the soldiers were sad because the French army was so much larger than their own. But the presence of the king so cheered them that those who "had before been disheartened felt reheartened on seeing and hearing him."

When the king had reviewed the whole army he gave orders that the men should be given food. So, sitting down on the ground, the soldiers ate their morning meal, and rested until the French should arrive.

Meanwhile, Philip's army was on its way, its ranks all in disorder. The king commanded four knights to ride forward to find out what the enemy was doing.

They soon returned to tell how the English, rested and refreshed, awaited them on the summit of a little hill. Looking at the straggling ranks of their own men, they then advised Philip to halt and let the soldiers rest and have food. "For the English," they said, "are cool and fresh, and our men are tired and in disorder."

So Philip commanded his marshals to call a halt. They at once rode along the ranks, crying, "Halt banners, by command of the king, in the name of God and St. Denis!"

At the cry the soldiers in front halted, but those behind still pressed forward, wishing to be the first to see the enemy.

When the soldiers in front saw that if they stood still they would lose their position, they too began to march on, heedless of the order of their king.

Before they were aware they were close to the English;

and, taken by surprise, the van of the army halted, while those behind still pressed forward, until the French army was little more than a pushing, struggling mob of men.

King Edward, with some men-at-arms, had withdrawn to a windmill which stood on the hillock, whence he could see the unbroken ranks of his own men and the confusion in the ranks of the French.

"They are ours," cried the men-at-arms, before ever the battle had begun.

Philip, seeing the English whom he hated, no longer wished to delay the battle, and he cried aloud to the hired archers, "Archers, begin the battle, in the name of God and St. Denis!"

But the archers were tired, and had expected to rest before they fought. Their bows, too, were slack, and they were in no mood to obey the king's orders.

While they hesitated a sudden storm broke upon the army. Thunder roared, lightning flashed, while rain fell in torrents, wetting the strings of the foreign archers. But the English kept their crossbows dry beneath their coats. It was only a passing storm, and soon the sun shone out, blinding the eyes of the French army.

Then at length the hired Italian archers unwillingly advanced, shouting and singing, thinking thus to frighten the English. But they paid no heed to the foreign soldiers' cries.

The Italians drew their bows. In a moment the sturdy archers of England had taken one step forward, and sent their arrows among the enemy. So sharp and fleet they sped that "it looked like a fall of snow."

Never had the Italians felt such stinging arrows. They were everywhere, around them, above them, beneath them. It was impossible to escape from these terrible darts.

At length, in despair, they flung down their bows and turned to flee.

Philip saw them throw their bows away, and in terrible

anger he bade the French soldiers kill the cowards. As the soldiers obeyed, the English arrows still sped swift, unerring, until Italian archers and French soldiers fell together in a confused mass.

Meanwhile, on another part of the field, the Black Prince was being hard pressed by the French. Though he was fearless and fought gallantly, the English knights were anxious lest the prince should be slain.

So they sent a messenger to the king to beg him send more men to the aid of his son.

Edward, watching from the windmill as the battle raged ever more fiercely, asked:

"Is my son dead or unhorsed, or so wounded that he cannot help himself?"

"Not so, my lord, please God," answered the messenger, "but he is fighting against great odds, and is like to have need of your help."

"Then return to those who sent you," said the king, "and tell them not to send for me, whatever chance befall them, so long as my son is alive; and tell them that I bid them let the lad win his spurs; for I wish, if God so deem, that the day should be his."

When the old blind King of Bohemia heard that the battle was going against the French, he asked his knights, "Where is my son Charles?"

But they would not break the old king's heart by telling him that his son had fled from the battlefield. Instead they lied, saying that Charles was doubtless fighting in another part of the field.

Then the blind king begged his knights to lead him to the front of the field, that he too might strike a blow for victory.

So the knights gathered up their horses' reins, and tied themselves together that they might not be separated. Then placing the king before them they rushed into the fray "like madmen bent upon sudden death." But before

death came the blind King of Bohemia had "struck a good blow, yea three and four, and so did all those who were with him."

When the battle of Crécy was over, the blind King was found dead, while his knights and their horses still tied together lay slain beside him.

Philip fought bravely, but his heart was heavy, for he knew the day was lost. It was nightfall when he rode away from the battlefield, attended by only four barons. When they reached the Castle of Broye they halted. It was dark and late and the castle gates were shut, the bridge drawn up.

"Who knocks?" cried the castellan from the tower, as the fugitives roused him by their thundering knocks.

"Open, castellan!" said Philip. "It is the unhappy King of France."

Then the keeper of the castle hastened down, lowered the drawbridge, and opened the gates to the king and his barons. After refreshing themselves with wine they set out again at midnight, and before dawn entered Amiens, where the king stayed until what was left of the French army reached him there.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SIEGE OF CALAIS

After the battle of Crécy Edward with his victorious army marched to Calais, and laid siege to the town. Calais was on the coast, and would be a safe and convenient haven for the English when they wished to sail to France.

It was in September 1346 that King Edward arrived at Calais. He knew that the town was too strong to be taken by assault, but he believed that if he could starve its inhabitants they would be forced to surrender.

So the king prepared for a long siege, building around Calais another town, made of wood, in which he determined to live, summer and winter, until Calais was taken.

The governor of the besieged town was John de Vienne. He soon saw that even with great care the food in the city would not last long. So he ordered the old men, women and children, who could not fight, to leave the town.

One day the sad procession passed slowly out of the gates of Calais, and came to the English town.

The English soldiers asked them why they had left the city. "We are poor," they answered, "and are either too old or too young to fight, so the governor has sent us away, for he cannot feed us during the siege."

When King Edward heard what had befallen these hapless folk, he ordered that they should be given a good dinner. After their meal they were allowed to go away, the king first giving a two-shilling piece to each of the forlorn band, "the which grace," says Froissart, "was commended as very handsome, and so indeed it was."

Winter passed, spring came, and then summer, and during all these months Philip had sent no help to Calais. Famine stared the defenders of the city in the face. Sometimes fisher folk in the neighborhood had succeeded in getting food into the town, but even this had now ceased to be possible.

John de Vienne wrote in despair to King Philip, "Everything has been eaten, cats, dogs, and horses, and we can no longer find victuals in the town, unless we eat human flesh.

"If we have not speedy succor, we will issue forth from the town to fight, whether to live or die, for we would rather die honarbly in the field than eat one another."

At length, in July 1347, Philip with a large army was seen to be approaching. How the starving folk rejoiced when they saw the banners of their king floating in the breeze. Now their hunger would soon be satisfied, now the gates of Calais would soon be flung wide open, and once again they would be free.

But day after day passed, and Philip could find no way to reach the town, so well were all its approaches guarded by the English king. Each day seemed a year to the starving people, yet their hopes were still centered on the king. But alas! while Philip talked of peace he found no way to reach the starving folk.

It had been some comfort to the people to crowd upon the walls of Calais, and look at the tents of Philip's army, where there was food in abundance, food that soon would surely be theirs. But one day in August, to the dismay of the starving folk, they saw that the tents were gone. Philip and his army were marching away from the besieged town. Then indeed the brave inhabitants of Calais were in despair. Their last hope was gone. Their king had not fought a battle to save them; nay, he had not even managed to send them a little food; he had gone away and left them to their fate. Sobs and cries broke from the hearts of the desperate, starving people.

There was now nothing to be done but to submit to the King of England, and Sir John de Vienne tried to make terms with the victor.

But Edward was in no mood to make terms. The siege had lasted long, and the king had lost many brave soldiers and spent much good money while the citizens of Calais had held their city against him.

He sent Sir Walter de Manny to the governor of the town to say that it must be surrendered to him without any conditions, while the inhabitants were to yield themselves to him that he might do with them as he would.

"The terms are too hard," pleaded John de Vienne to Sir Walter. "Go back and beg your king to have mercy upon us."

So Sir Walter went back to King Edward, and besought him to grant easier terms to the brave men of Calais.

At first the king refused to listen, but when all his knights added their entreaties to those of Sir Walter, the king at length yielded.

"Go then," he said, "and tell the governor of Calais that the greatest grace they can find in my sight is that six of the most notable burghers come forth from their town bare-headed, bare-footed, with ropes round their necks, and with the keys of the town of Calais in their hands. With these will I do according to my will, and the rest I will receive to mercy."

John de Vienne listened until Sir Walter de Manny had delivered his message, then slowly he went to the market-place, and bade that the great bell of the city be rung. As the clang of the bell, slow and solemn, fell upon the ears of the people, they hastened to the square to hear what their brave governor had to tell.

But when they knew the king's will, the poor starving folk wept bitterly. Even John de Vienne could no longer try to comfort them, for the tears were streaming down his own cheeks as he saw the despair of the people.

Bitterly the hungry folk wept, for they deemed that there was not one, and certainly that there were not six, burghers who would give their lives to save them all from death.

Then, so Froissart tells us, as the sobs of the people fell upon his heart, Eustace de St. Pierre, the richest burgher of the town, arose.

"Sir," he said to the governor, "it would be a great pity to leave this people to die by famine or otherwise. . . . I have great hope to find favor in the eyes of our Lord if I die to save this people."

When the people heard these words they threw themselves at the feet of the good man, weeping for joy. Then slowly, one after another, five other burghers stepped forward, and offered to give up their lives for the sake of the other citizens of Calais.

On the 5th August 1347 St. Pierre with five burghers noble as himself, bare-headed, bare-footed, with ropes round their necks, and the city keys in their hands, walked along the streets of Calais, followed by the tears and blessings of the starving folk they were leaving behind.

When they reached the gates they were thrown open, and the six burghers passed bravely out to their doom.

As King Edward gazed upon these men in their pitiful guise, he grew angry, remembering his own good soldiers who had perished during the long siege, and he ordered that the six burghers should at once be beheaded.

The king's knights begged him to be merciful, but Edward only bade them be silent and do his will.

Sir Walter de Manny dared yet again to plead that the burghers' lives might be spared. "Gentle sir," he said to the king, "you have renown for gentleness and nobleness, be pleased to do nought whereby it may be diminished."

But the king turned upon the knight furiously, saying, "Sir Walter, hold your peace. Let them fetch my headsman."

Then his wife, Queen Philippa, fell at her lord's feet. "Ah, gentle sir," she cried, "I pray you humbly, as a special

boon, for the sake of Holy Mary's Son and for the love of me, you will please to have mercy on these six men."

As he looked at the queen bending at his feet, the king's heart at last grew kind, and he answered, "Ha, dame, I had much rather you had been elsewhere than here. But you pray me such prayers that I dare not refuse you, and though it irks me to do so, there, I give them up to you; do with them as you will."

Gladly Queen Philippa thanked her lord. Then rising to her feet she speedily led the six burghers to her own rooms. Here they were clothed in clean robes and given a good dinner, for well the queen knew that for many months they had had nought to eat save only enough to keep them alive. Then the brave burghers were sent safely back to the people for whom they had dared so much.

Calais now belonged to the English, and for more than two hundred years it remained an English stronghold.

Philip had suffered heavy losses during the war, and in 1347, when the siege of Calais was over, he was glad to agree to a truce with England for ten years.

Thus, for a time, France was delivered from war. But a terrible calamity, as bad as war itself, overtook her in 1348, for the plague called the Black Death, which had already been causing havoc in Italy, reached France.

Men, women and children were stricken down in a day by the dread disease. And there were few who dared to tend the sick, lest they too should catch the terrible illness. Only a few monks and nuns went bravely in and out among the dying people, carrying with them for protection nought save the Cross of Christ.

For two long years the Black Death claimed its victims. Then, in 1350, it gradually disappeared, and men, women and children were able once again to do their work, to play their games, without fear clutching at their hearts lest they should be the next to be smitten with the Black Death.

While the Black Death still raged, the lord of Dauphiny,

chastened it may be by fear of the terrible plague, determined to go into a monastery. He therefore sold his land to Philip, on condition that it should never be joined to the crown of France, but should always belong to the eldest son of the king. From this time, therefore, the eldest son of the French king always bore the title of the Dauphin, and ruled over the land which had once belonged to the lord of Dauphiny.

Philip, like other kings of whom you have read, was often in need of money, and to procure it he had put heavy taxes on his subjects. Before his death he imposed a new tax on salt, called *Gabelle*. This tax was bitterly resented by the poor people both now and in later years.

In 1350 Philip the Fortunate died. And you have seen for yourselves that never was a less fitting name found for any king than the one the people bestowed on Philip of Valois.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE BATTLE OF POITIERS

PHILIP'S son John now became king. He was named "the Good" by his favorites, not because they thought their king was an upright, noble man, but because they knew him to be a "good fellow," who loaded them with gifts.

King John was rash, cruel, and selfish, yet he was also brave and chivalrous, when to be so did not interfere too greatly with his pleasures.

Charles the Bad of Navarre was a kinsman of John the Good, but for all that the king hated him, and wished to make war upon him. For John had had a favorite to whom he gave lands, which Charles of Navarre claimed as his. In his anger that the king had thrust aside his claims, Charles the Bad had killed the king's favorite. It was for this crime that John was determined to punish his kinsman.

But Charles was supported by many of the lords of France, as well as by the friendship of the King of England. It was therefore impossible for John to war against Navarre without being forced to fight with England as well, and for this France was not yet ready.

King John therefore pretended to forgive Charles, who was also, I should tell you, the king's son-in-law. He even received him at court, when Charles the Bad thanked him for his grace on bended knee.

But those who knew him best felt sure that King John had not really forgiven Charles. They had heard him mutter, "I will have no master in France but myself. I shall have no joy as long as he is living."

John's son, Charles the Dauphin, was at this time made Duke of Normandy. He became good friends with Charles the Bad, and in the spring of 1356 he asked him, with some of his friends, to a banquet at Rouen.

The party was a merry one, but the merriment was suddenly disturbed by the entrance of King John with a troop of soldiers, and an officer who held in his hand a naked sword.

"Let none stir, whatever he may see, unless he wish to fall by this sword!" said the officer in a loud voice.

King John meanwhile moved toward the table, and the dauphin and his guests rose to greet their sovereign. But the king paid no attention to any one save Charles the Bad.

Drawing him aside, he said, "Get up, traitor, thou art not worthy to sit at my son's table. By my father's soul, I cannot think of meat or drink so long as thou art living." Then King John bade his soldiers take Charles of Navarre prisoner.

The dauphin flung himself at his father's feet, and begged him not to harm his guests. "It will be said that I have betrayed them," he cried in distress.

But the king thrust his son aside, and ordered the barons who had come with Charles the Bad to the feast to be beheaded.

Charles himself John sent to prison, where he was kept in constant fear as to what was to be his fate. For each day his guards told him that, at a certain hour, he would be beheaded, and when the hour had passed and Charles was still alive, they told him another hour at which he would be thrown into the river Seine.

As you may imagine, a king who could treat his son's guests so treacherously, and who could torture his prisoner in the way Charles the Bad was tortured, was not likely to be loved by his people. More and more his subjects grew to hate him, and some of his barons deserted King John and served in the army of the King of England.

After the siege of Calais a truce, you remember, was made with England for ten years. Nine years had passed, but, though no great battle had been fought during that time, the truce between the two countries had not been strictly kept. King John had even made an attempt to get back Calais, but had failed. Now, however, in 1356 the Black Prince had landed in France at Bordeaux, and leading his army northward into the country of the river Loire, he had burned and pillaged the towns through which he passed.

When King John heard of the Black Prince's march, he at once set out with a large army, hoping to be able to cut off his return to Bordeaux. For the Black Prince, knowing that the French army was much larger than his own, was now on his way back to the coast, so that, if it were necessary, he might embark for England.

But King John succeeded, as he had hoped to do, in coming between the prince and Bordeaux, near the town of Poitiers.

Then, because the French army was many times larger than his own, the Black Prince offered to give up all the towns and castles he had taken, to set free all the French prisoners, and to promise not to fight against France for seven years, if he and his army were allowed to march on unhindered.

King John would not accept the offer of the prince. He was determined to give battle to the English, unless the Black Prince and all his army would give themselves up to him as prisoners.

To this the English prince never dreamed of agreeing. Then King John said he would be content with the Black Prince and one hundred of his knights.

But to this demand also the prince refused to listen, and preparing for battle, said fearlessly, "God will defend the right."

If its numbers were small, the position of the English

army was good. For it had taken its stand upon a rough hillside covered with vineyards. To reach the hill from the front there was but one way, and this was through a narrow lane, on either side of which was a thick hedge. Behind these hedges the Black Prince had placed his archers, who were thus unseen by the French.

At the foot of the hill lay John's large army. Had the French been willing to wait, they could have guarded every approach to the hill and starved the English into submission. But they were eager at once to win the victory, which they never doubted would be theirs.

As John moved among his soldiers he was surrounded by nineteen knights, each wearing the same dress as the king, so that he might be less easily recognized in the battle. Before the knights waved the Oriflamme from St. Denis.

The vanguard of the French army was now ordered to advance. Up the narrow lane the soldiers rode, when to their astonishment they were greeted on either side by a shower of arrows from an unseen foe. And the deadly shower never ceased, for the English archers poured their darts upon the miserable soldiers so fast, so sure, that they worked deadly havoc. The lane was soon filled with the slain and wounded.

Those who were behind, seeing how their comrades were being smitten, turned backward upon the men who were led by the dauphin.

At the same moment the English archers broke from their hiding-place behind the hedges, and dashed upon the retreating foe.

The Black Prince seized the same moment to ride down upon the enemy, shouting, "St. George! St. George!" and soon the French were flying in every direction.

Among those who fled was Charles the Dauphin, with two of his brothers, followed by about eight hundred knights.

But King John was no coward, and soon he had rallied

his men and prepared to make a stand against the English, who had come down from the hill and held no better position than the French.

The Black Prince, Froissart tells us, "who aimed at perfectness of honor, rode onward to meet the French, with his banner before him, succouring the people whenever he saw them scattering or unsteady, and proving himself a right good knight."

In the midst of his knights King John fought as bravely as the Black Prince, defending himself with a battle-ax. By his side was his young son Philip, a lad of fourteen, who tried his best to ward off the blows that were aimed at his father.

And ever above the strife his clear young voice rang out, "Father, strike here; father, strike there." It was on the field of Poitiers that Philip earned his name "the Bold," which was his when he became the Duke of Burgundy.

"Yield you, yield you, or else you die!" cried the English, as they hurled their blows at King John, some not knowing that it was the king, others knowing it well.

The Oriflamme fell to the ground as the knight who guarded it was slain, and then at length King John and his brave son Philip were taken prisoners and led before the Black Prince, who received them courteously, "as he well knew how to do," says his chronicler.

In the evening, when the battle was ended, the Black Prince asked King John, his son, and many of his noble prisoners, to supper. Nor would the prince sit at table with his royal captives, even when King John begged him to do so, but he himself waited on his guests at though they were his lords.

It was not a merry supper party, and King John looked so sad that the Black Prince, kneeling before him, said, "Dear sir, be pleased not to put on so sad a countenance, because it hath not pleased God that you should win the

day, for the prize of valor is yours, since every Englishman saw that none bore himself as bravely as you."

Some time after he had won the battle of Poitiers, which was fought on the 15th September 1356, the Black Prince sailed for England, taking with him his royal prisoner, King John.

When they reached London, the Black Prince and his captive rode through the streets of the capital, and while the people cheered their gallant prince, they marveled to see him riding on a little black palfrey, while his prisoner was mounted on a noble white steed. But this was one of the ways which the brave prince took to show King John that he would treat him royally and well. King Edward, too, was kind to the great captive his son had brought home; nevertheless, King John was kept a prisoner in England for four years.

CHAPTER XXX

THE REBELLION OF JACQUES

DURING the four years that King John was kept in England, Charles the Dauphin, who had fled from the field of Poitiers, ruled over France in his father's stead. But the country was in a miserable state, and Charles was too young to govern it with the strong hand which it needed.

Hired soldiers, called Free Lances, who fought for whoever paid them the largest sums, wandered through the country. And the people of France learned to dread and hate these Free Lances, who showed respect to none, and who robbed and killed all who came in their way.

The nobles, too, treated the peasants worse than slaves, until at length they forsook their miserable huts, and went away into the forests to live in caves. For no hardships were so great as those which their masters laid upon them.

It seemed to the nobles that the peasants would always suffer without a word, and they mocked at their sullen faces, and nicknamed them *Jacques Bonhomme,* or as we would say, "Jack Goodfellow."

But the barons made a mistake when they thought that the peasants would submit to their exactions for ever.

For at length, in 1358, goaded into desperation by the cruelty of their lords, the peasants armed themselves with scythes and pitchforks, or any weapon on which they could lay their hands, and attacked the nobles, burning their castles, slaying their wives, and even their little children. Then they wandered through the country, the poor peasant

women dressed in the fine garments they had stripped off the wives of the nobles.

This revolt of the peasants was called the *Jacquerie,* or the Rebellion of Jacques, from the name *Jacques Bonhomme,* given so carelessly by the barons to the peasants on whom they trampled. Other risings of the peasants in after-years were also called by the same name.

At first the nobles were alarmed at the fury of the *Jacquerie.* Charles the Bad, who had been set free when King John was taken prisoner, invited the leaders of the rebellious peasants to meet him, pretending that he wished to help them. But when they came he cruelly put them to death, first placing on the head of their chief a red-hot iron. Only then did the nobles take courage to go out against the *Jacquerie,* and hunt them to death as they would have hunted wild beasts.

Meanwhile, in Paris itself there was great unrest. Etienne Marcel, the chief magistrate of the city, demanded that the dauphin should reduce the heavy taxes which King John had laid on the people.

Charles paid no attention to Marcel's demands, so the magistrate, with a band of armed men, forced his way into the dauphin's presence as the prince talked with his two chief advisers, the Counts of Champagne and Normandy.

The armed men wore caps of red and blue, which colors were worn by the rebellious citizens.

Marcel no sooner saw Charles than he boldly demanded that the taxes should be reduced. The Counts dared to interrupt the magistrate, whereupon Marcel turned to his fellows with the red and blue caps, saying sternly, "Do that for which ye are come."

In a moment the rough citizens had seized the Counts of Champagne and Normandy, and slain them in the presence of the dauphin. He, thinking that he also would be slain, fell at Marcel's feet, miserably begging for mercy.

"Take no heed, lord duke," said the magistrate, "you

have nought to fear," and he placed his own red-and-blue cap on the dauphin's head.

But though Marcel saved the dauphin's life, Charles never forgave him for the death of the counts.

Some time later the citizens of Paris grew jealous of Marcel's power. They asked the dauphin, who had fled from Paris, to return. But he refused to do so while Marcel was alive in the city.

Marcel, knowing that his influence over the citizens was fast passing away, turned to Charles of Navarre, promising him the keys of the capital if he would come to his help against the dauphin and the people of Paris.

Charles would gladly be master of Paris. His ambition whispered to him that it was but a step from being master of Paris to becoming King of France, and he accepted Marcel's offer with eagerness. On a certain night, therefore, he came with his followers to one of the gates of Paris to receive from Marcel's hands the keys of the city.

But there was a traitor among Marcel's friends. The citizens learned what the magistrate had promised to do, and as he went at midnight, with a few of his followers, to seize the gates and open them to Charles of Navarre, a troop of citizens fell upon him and put him to death. They then sent for the dauphin, who came back in triumph to the city.

King John all this time was still a prisoner in England. The French now wished to set their king free, but King Edward's terms were so hard that the dauphin refused to agree to them.

Edward therefore determined again to make war on France, and win in battle the towns the dauphin refused to give to him as the price of his father's freedom. Early in 1360 he landed at Calais with a large army, and marched through France, burning and plundering the country, which was already miserable enough with its own quarrels and rebellions.

At length King Edward encamped before Paris, where Charles the Dauphin, or the Regent as he had now been called for some time, was watching his progress.

But the English army was not strong enough to attack the city, and the Regent had no intention of leaving the safety of its walls to risk a battle.

So King Edward, finding it difficult to provide food for his army, withdrew from Paris, and in May 1360 agreed to make peace with France.

By the Peace of Bretigny, Edward III. gave up his claim to the French throne, keeping however many of his French provinces. King John was also set free, his son, Louis of Anjou, promising to remain at Calais as hostage until the king's heavy ransom was paid.

The people of France rejoiced when the Treaty of Bretigny became known, for they were tired of the cruel war, and longed for peace.

And King John returned gladly to his own country, his long captivity at an end. But before a year had passed, Louis of Anjou, who had promised to stay in Calais as hostage until his father's ransom was paid, broke his word, and escaped from the city.

King John, who in spite of his many faults would not have broken his plighted word, upbraided his son, saying that, "If good faith were banished from the world, it ought to find an asylum in the hearts of kings."

The king showed that his displeasure was real, for he himself went back to England to "make the excuses of his son, the Duke of Anjou, who had returned to France."

For a short time King John was once again a prisoner, but three months after his return to England he took ill, and died in April 1364.

CHAPTER XXXI

SIR BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN

CHARLES V., named the Wise, you have already known as the Dauphin who fled from the field of Poitiers, and who begged on his knees that the magistrate Marcel would spare his life. But Charles the Dauphin and Charles the Wise were two very different persons.

The king was tall and thin, and looked so sad that his subjects had no great love for him. His health was so poor that they seldom saw him. As for the nobles, they loved their sports and their tournaments, and paid little attention to their melancholy-looking king.

But before long the nation awoke to the fact that a strong, wise hand was ruling France. The hand belonged to Charles V., who spent most of his time in a quiet room in one of his palaces.

Unlike the kings who came before him, Charles was not able to lead his armies to battle. It was therefore necessary that he should have a good general.

And Charles was fortunate, for in Bertrand du Guesclin, a knight of Brittany, he found one of the bravest and strongest leaders of men.

"Bertrand du Guesclin," says a chronicler of the time, "was the ugliest child in the district in which he lived. As he grew up he became broad-shouldered, big-headed, always ready to strike on being struck."

Guesclin became one of the Free Lances of whom I have told you, and led Free Lances like himself to battle. But though the hero of Brittany was a rough and cruel

soldier, to the poor, to women and children, he was ever kind and gentle.

Until he was thirty Guesclin was little known, either for his strength or his goodness, save amongst the knights of Brittany. But Charles the Wise had heard of Sir Bertrand, and when in 1364 he became king, he sent one of his marshals to the knight, to engage him to fight on behalf of the King of France.

Their first exploit, for the marshal and Guesclin fought side by side, was to take a town belonging to Charles the Bad, King of Navarre. Their next was to dash into another town with their wild Free Lances, shouting "Death, death to all Navarrese!" This town they also took, "whereat Charles v. was very joyous when he heard the news, and the King of Navarre was very wroth."

As was but natural, Charles of Navarre was eager to avenge these wrongs. He assembled a large army of Free Lances, and put them under a famous officer called the Captal de Buch.

Guesclin also collected a strong force from Brittany, and from the bands of Free Lances that were eager to serve under so great a captain as Sir Bertrand.

As the two armies drew near to one another, Guesclin disclosed his plan to his comrades.

"The Captal," he said, "is, as you know, a gallant knight. Until he is taken he will do us great hurt. Therefore let thirty of our boldest pay heed to nothing, but make straight toward the Captal, take him captive, and lead him away from the field, without waiting for the end of the battle."

Guesclin's comrades agreed that the plan was a good one. "The picked thirty, well mounted on the flower of steeds, and with no thought but for their enterprise, came all compact together to where was the Captal, who was fighting right valiantly with his ax, and was dealing blows so mighty that none durst come nigh him; but the thirty broke through the press by dint of their horses, made right

up to him, halted hard by him, took him and shut him in amongst them by force. Then they bore him away, whilst his men, who were like to go mad, shouted, 'A rescue for the Captal! a rescue!' But nought could avail them or help them, and the Captal was carried off and placed in safety."

After a desperate struggle the Captal's banner was then captured, torn to pieces, and trampled underfoot. Guesclin and his men had won the day.

Charles v. was so pleased with his general that he made him Marshal of Normandy, on condition that he should clear the land of the bands of Free Lances that still wandered all over the country. But this condition Guesclin, being himself a Free Lance, took little trouble to fulfill.

In his next battle the knight was taken prisoner by the English. But Charles v. could not do without his general, and willingly paid a heavy ransom that Sir Bertrand might be free.

Then in 1367 Guesclin was sent into Spain to fight against Pedro the Cruel, who oppressed his subjects and had even slain his own wife.

At first he was successful in this war, but when Pedro was joined by the English under the Black Prince, Guesclin was defeated and again taken prisoner.

Before long, however, the knight was set free, and this is the story of how it happened.

One day, being in a merry mood, the Black Prince began to talk to Sir Bertrand.

"My lords counsel me not to set you free," said the prince to his prisoner, "not so long as there is war between France and England."

"Sir," answered Guesclin, "then am I the most honored knight in the world, for they say in the kingdom of France and elsewhere that you are more afraid of me than any others."

"Think you, then, that it is for your prowess that we keep you?" said the prince, his gay mood changing to a

haughty one. "Nay, by St. George, fix your own ransom and you shall be free."

Guesclin named so large a sum that the prince was surprised.

"Sir," said Sir Bertrand, seeing his astonishment, "the king, in whose keeping is France, will lend me what I lack; and there is not a spinning-wench in France who would not spin to gain for me what is necessary to put me out of your clutches."

The brave prisoner was then set free to collect his ransom, giving his word of honor to return to captivity if he could not find the money.

But he succeeded in getting the sum that was necessary, and, so the story goes, was riding cheerily on his way back to the Black Prince, when he met ten sad and weary-looking knights, who had been trying in vain to find money for their ransoms.

Then Sir Bertrand, with ungrudging heart and open hands, gave to these sad knights all the money which he had painfully gathered together for his own freedom, and himself went back into captivity. It was for deeds such as this that Sir Bertrand du Guesclin was beloved by all who knew him. The good knight's captivity lasted but a short time longer, for the King of France himself paid his knight's ransom.

Meanwhile the Black Prince, whose constant wars had made him ill and irritable, had levied such heavy taxes on his subjects in Aquitaine, that they appealed to Charles v. to help them.

The king was pleased to quarrel with the Black Prince, for he had been watching for a chance to make war upon England, and here was the opportunity he had wished. He summoned the prince to Paris to defend himself against the complaints of his subjects in Aquitaine, and bade him come as quickly as he could.

When the Black Prince heard Charles's message he

answered after a moment's silence, "We will go willingly at our own time, since the King of France doth bid us, but it shall be with our helmet upon our head and sixty thousand men at our back."

Perhaps the king had expected some such answer from so gallant a knight as the Black Prince, and since it meant war with England, Charles was content. He at once sent for Guesclin and made him Constable of France, Constable being the title of the Commander-in-chief of the French army.

Guesclin was dismayed at so great an honor, and begged the king to bestow this office and title upon one of higher rank. "For," said the sturdy knight, "how can I lay commands on those who may be relatives of the king himself?"

"Sir Bertrand, Sir Bertrand," answered the king, "do not excuse yourself after this fashion. I have no brother, nor cousin, nor nephew, nor count, nor baron in my kingdom, who would not obey you; and if any should do otherwise, he would anger me so that he would hear of it. Take therefore the office with a good heart, I beseech you." So Guesclin became Constable of France.

It was in April 1369 that war once more broke out between France and England. But the hold of the English on France had grown slighter during the years that Charles the Wise had been ruling, and it was now the more easily shaken off.

In the war that followed the French were everywhere victorious. The Black Prince was too ill to lead his men so well as he had been used to do. Indeed, sometimes he was so weak that he had to be carried on a litter to the battlefield.

Meanwhile the constable marched across France, taking towns that had long been held by the English, driving out English garrisons, and everywhere making terms favorable to the French king.

Following the advice of Charles the Wise, Guesclin took

care not to risk a battle with the enemy. So the Black Prince, seeing that the French were safe in strongly fortified towns, led his army to Bordeaux, and set sail for England.

By this war the English had lost all their large possessions in France, being left with only Bordeaux and a few towns in Normandy.

King Edward was now an old man, yet wishing to win back what he had lost, he raised an army and sailed from Southampton. But it was autumn, the gales were fierce, and for nine weeks the king struggled in vain to reach the French coast. At length, in despair, he gave orders to make again for the English shore.

"Never was there King of France," he said, "who wore so little armor, yet never was there one who has given me so much to do."

In 1375 a truce was again made between France and England. The following year the Black Prince, who had long suffered from fever, passed away; while in 1377, the year that the truce with France ended, Edward III., who had been sorely grieved at the loss of his son, also died.

Charles V. now determined to join Brittany to the crown of France, but the Bretons, led by their Lord, John de Montfort, rose in rebellion. The king ordered Guesclin to go to punish them. But the constable, you remember, was himself a Breton, and he ventured to advise the king to make peace with Sir John de Montfort.

This led to a quarrel between Charles and his faithful servant. Guesclin, angry with the king, sent the sword which he wore as constable back to his master, which was as if he had said, "I will no longer be commander of your army."

But the king, who cared for no other, cared for Guesclin, and refused to let his constable go. Instead of being sent to Brittany, Guesclin was ordered, in July 1380, to go to

the south of France to besiege a fortress still held by the English.

After the siege had lasted some time, the governor of the little town promised to give up the keys of the fortress to the constable if help did not reach him before a certain day. Before the day came Guesclin took ill. His captains gathered around his bed as he lay dying; and the constable, who had seen rough deeds done in his day, said to them, "Captains, never forget, in whatsoever country you are making war, that churchmen, women, children, and the poor people, are not your enemies." Then he passed away.

It is said that when the governor of the town heard that the constable was dead, he begged still to be allowed to put the keys of the town into the hands of the commander.

So, marching out of the fortress at the head of his men, the governor was led to the tent where Sir Bertrand lay. Then, sobbing the while, he laid the keys in the still hands of the great soldier.

There was great sorrow at the death of Guesclin. "Let all know," says the chronicler, "that there was there no knight, nor squire, French or English, who showed not great mourning."

As for the king, he ordered that the constable should be buried in a tomb near to one which had been built for himself.

Nine years later, the son of Charles v. ordered a second funeral service to be held at the tomb of Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, the hero of Brittany, the king himself, with his lords and barons, being at the ceremony.

A poet who was also there wrote some verses on the hero. Here are a few of the lines which you may like to read:

"The tears of princes fell,
What time the Bishop said,
'Sir Bertrand loved ye well,
Weep, warriors, for the dead.

"'The knell of sorrow tolls,
For deeds that were so bright,
God save all Christian souls,
And his—the gallant knight.'"

Two months after the death of Sir Bertrand, in September 1380, Charles v. fell ill and died. It was said that he had been poisoned by his enemy, Charles the Bad, King of Navarre. Soon after this the King of Navarre himself was burned to death by an accident.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE BATTLE OF ROOSEBEK

CHARLES THE WISE was anxious that his little son should be well trained for his kingly duties.

Before his death he had sent for two of his brothers, the Duke of Berri and the Duke of Burgundy, as well as for his queen's brother, the Duke of Bourbon.

To them he entrusted the little prince, saying, "Behave to him as good uncles, and counsel him loyally in all his affairs. All my trust is in you; the child is young and fickle-minded, and great need there is he should be governed by good teaching."

For the Duke of Anjou, his other brother, the king had not sent, because he knew him to be selfish, greedy, ambitious, and unfit to take charge of his little nephew.

If the little prince was fond of excitement and games, it was only natural, and he had simple, boylike tastes. Shortly before his death Charles v. told his son that he might choose any one of his most beautiful jewels. The boy glanced at the sparkling stones, then passed them by and chose instead a little helmet. Beside the helmet he hung at the top of his bed a tiny suit of armor, too small to wear, but which seemed to give great pleasure to the little prince.

While the boy-king was young, his four uncles ruled his kingdom. They were called the "Princes of the Lilies," because on their shields they bore the royal arms of France, gold lilies or *fleur-de-lys* on a background of blue.

There are different legends told about the *fleur-de-lys.*

Far back, in the time of the Merovingian kings, the royal banner was blue with gold lilies. At first it is supposed the emblem was meant to represent the head of a javelin, or it may have arisen from the custom among the Franks of placing a "reed or flag in blossom," instead of a scepter, in the hands of each newly crowned king. In the Middle Ages the *fleur-de-lys* was the emblem of the Virgin Mary. It was also often to be seen in church banners and altar decorations. In 1789, as you shall hear, the beautiful banners of the *fleur-de-lys* were replaced by flags of blue, white and red, called the Tricolor.

The Duke of Anjou was one of the "Lily Princes." He was very angry that Charles v. had not summoned him to the royal bedchamber along with his brothers. But though the dying king did not know it, the duke had hidden himself in the next room, and the moment his brother had breathed his last he seized the crown jewels, and all the gold and silver he could find. He then asked the treasurer to tell him where the king had concealed the rest of his wealth.

The treasurer made an effort to be true to his dead master, and said that he had promised not to tell. Without a moment's hesitation the Duke of Anjou ordered the faithful servant to be beheaded.

But the man's faithfulness could not stand so severe a test, and he hastily told the duke where he would find the king's secret treasure.

It was this greedy duke who was now made regent. But he had no wish to stay at home and govern France, for his heart was set on becoming King of Naples. So he raised an army to march into Italy to fight for the crown he longed to wear.

But he could not leave France as soon as he wished, for although he had seized the treasures of Charles v., the duke had not enough money to pay his soldiers, so he laid heavy taxes on the citizens of Paris.

The townsfolk refused to be taxed to pay for the duke's foreign wars. Arming themselves with clubs or any weapon they could seize, they killed those who came to collect the taxes. Then working themselves up into a frenzy, the mob broke open the prisons, and set free the prisoners to join in the riot.

Even the greedy duke saw that he must abolish his taxes if he wished to quell the revolt before more harm was done. So he promised to reduce the taxes, and the citizens, trusting to his word, laid down their arms.

No sooner had they done so than the duke ordered the leaders of the riot to be arrested. Then, in the dead of night, he made his soldiers tie them up in sacks and throw them into the river Seine. The cruel duke then went away with his army to Italy.

But misfortune dogged his steps. Before he had been long in Italy food began to run short, and it was impossible to buy provisions, for the King of Naples took care that none should be sent to the prince who had come to take his crown.

The duke offered all he possessed for food, but in vain. His anger and want of proper nourishment left him an easy prey to fever, which now attacked him, and from which he never recovered.

Philip, Duke of Burgundy, then became regent. This was the Philip who fought so bravely by his father's side at the battle of Poitiers.

Almost at once he was forced to march into Flanders to put down a rebellion of the burghers against the Count of Flanders.

The burghers were led by Philip van Artevelde, a son of the great brewer who had helped Edward III. at the battle of Sluys.

When the burghers heard that the Duke of Burgundy, with the young king and an army, was coming to punish

them for their rebellion, they were dismayed, for the English had refused to come to their help.

Philip van Artevelde, however, assembled his captains, and bade them have no fear, for they were defending the liberties of their country.

"Tell your men," he said, "to show no quarter. We must spare the King of France only; he is a child, and must be pardoned. We will take him away to Ghent and have him taught Flemish."

Meanwhile, the Duke of Burgundy, who had reached Flanders, had given the young king into the charge of Oliver Clisson, who had been made constable after the death of Guesclin.

Clisson knew it was an honor to have charge of the little king, but he also knew that his soldiers would need him in the midst of the battlefield. He therefore begged Charles to excuse him.

The boy-king answered, "Constable, I would fain have you in my company to-day. You know well that my father loved and trusted you more than any other. In the name of God and St. Denis, do whatever you think best." So Clisson went back to his soldiers.

At Roosebek, not far from Courtrai, where you remember the Flemings had won a great victory, another battle was now fought in 1382.

Philip van Artevelde, seeing the numbers of the French, began to lose a little of the great confidence he had had, while the French insolently said, "These fellows are ours; our very varlets might beat them."

The Flemings, however, fought bravely, tying themselves together so as to advance in a solid body upon the enemy.

But Clisson was a good general, and soon he had surrounded the burghers, and was attacking them on every side. It was impossible for the burghers to escape, and even had they been able they would probably have been too proud to flee from the field. Thus almost the whole

army of Ghent perished, while the leader of the rebellion, Philip van Artevelde, was also slain.

As the Flemings now again submitted to their count, the French were soon able to march home. Charles was proud of his first victory. He himself took the Oriflamme, which had been at the head of the army, back to St. Denis, and the following day he marched with his army into Paris.

The loyal citizens came out, as was their custom, to welcome their king, to rejoice in his victory. But Charles and the Duke of Burgundy refused their homage, and curtly bade them begone. For the citizens had rebelled against the heavy taxes imposed on them by the regent, and the king, urged by his uncles, now resolved to punish them.

Perhaps the victory at Roosebek had made the king eager to use his power. In any case, more than three hundred of the principal citizens were, in 1382, put to death by his order.

Among these was one named Jean des Marests, a clever lawyer, who had often during the last two years made peace between the regent and the people. But he had also advised the citizens to carry arms and put up barricades for the defense of the city when the regent had increased the taxes.

Jean was condemned to death, in spite of all his good offices. On the way to the place of execution he was put on a car "higher than the rest, that he might be better seen by everybody." He was seventy years old, yet when he heard his cruel sentence he remained undisturbed, saying only, "Let them come and set forth the reasons for my death."

When Jean reached the place of execution, the people cried, "Ask the king's mercy, Master Jean, that he may pardon your offenses."

Des Marests, when he heard the people's words, answered, "I served well and loyally his great-grandfather, King Philip, his grandfather, King John, and his father, Charles. None

of these kings had anything to reproach me with, and this one would not reproach me any the more if he were of a grown man's age and experience. I don't suppose that he is a whit to blame for such a sentence, and I have no cause to cry him mercy. To God alone must I cry for mercy, and I pray Him to forgive my sins."

When the citizens had been duly punished, the taxes, especially the hated salt tax called the *Gabelle,* were again imposed.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE MAD KING

In the summer of 1385 Charles VI., who was not sixteen years of age, married Isabelle of Bavaria, a selfish and cruel princess.

Three years later the king began to rule his kingdom himself, dismissing his uncles from the court, yet thanking them graciously for the trouble they had taken to rule the realm. Their nephew's kind words did not soothe the Lily Princes, who were very angry with the king for sending them away.

His uncles being gone, Charles recalled many of the old ministers who had served his father. But the king's greatest trust was in the Constable Clisson, whom he both loved and admired.

For a time the new government pleased the people, for justice was restored and taxes were lowered. This change lasted only for a short time, for Charles was fond of feast and tournament, and he spent such enormous sums on his amusements that the treasury was soon empty, and once again the taxes had to be raised.

But the king loved war as well as amusements. He began to collect an army to fight against England, and at the same time he ordered a wooden town to be built. This town he intended to carry to England, and set up as a fortress upon her shore.

When his fleet at length set sail, it got no farther than two miles out to sea, for a storm arose and drove it back. As no one save the king had much faith in the expedition,

it was not again attempted. But before the orders to unload the fleet and place it in a safe port had been carried out, the English sailed down upon the French, taking many of their ships and the provisions stored up in them. Thus even the king was forced to give up his hope of invading England.

All this time the king's uncles were nursing their anger at the government being taken out of their hands. They hated the constable, as well as the king's other advisers, many of whom were of humble birth. These the Lily Princes, in their scorn, called *Marmousets,* which means "Monkeys."

It is said that they did more than give those they disliked nicknames. But whether or no it was the doing of the dukes, it is certain that one night Clisson was attacked in the streets of Paris, and wellnigh killed.

Charles, who, as I told you, loved the constable, was very angry when he heard what had happened. He was preparing for bed when tidings of the attack reached the palace, and the king at once insisted on going to see the wounded man.

Clisson was faint but conscious when the king reached him. He whispered to Charles that it was a servant belonging to his brother, the Duke of Orleans, who had attacked him.

The king at once determined to punish the assassin, who had fled to the Duke of Brittany for protection. If the assassin were not given up he would make war on Brittany.

In August, 1392, the king therefore set out for the duke's domains with an army. His uncles were with him, although they had no wish to see the assassin given up to justice.

Charles himself was not well. He had had fever, and his physicians had forbidden him to go out in the hot days of August.

Nevertheless, the king would go. He was dressed in a tight velvet jacket, while on his head he wore a scarlet

cap, adorned with pearls. His clothing was not suited for the heat, which was intense.

Behind Charles rode two pages, the army being some distance off, so that the dust they raised as they marched might not reach the king.

Just as Charles entered a thick forest, a tall man, dressed in a white smock, with bare head and bare feet, dashed out from behind a tree, and, seizing the king's horse by the bridle, cried, "Go no farther! Thou art betrayed!"

The king was startled, as well he might be, by this strange, wild-looking man, yet he determined to go on.

As the heat grew more intense, one of the pages fell half asleep as he rode slowly along behind the king. Suddenly the lance he carried slipped from his grasp, and fell with a crash against the helmet of the other page.

Charles started, and looked wildly around him. Then, drawing his sword, he set spurs to his horse and dashed forward, crying, "Treason! treason!" He then turned furiously upon his pages, chasing them backwards and forwards. His uncles and lords, hearing the king's voice, hastened up, but before Charles could be secured he had killed four of his escort.

The heat and the fight had made the poor king mad. His people carried him home, and at first his physicians thought that he was dead, so quiet and still he lay. But after a time his body grew strong again, although his mind was never again really well, save for some few short intervals.

Sometimes, usually in spring, the poor king's madness having passed away, he would try to do some good to his people, to put some wrong right. And his subjects, full of compassion for the misery of their king, called him Charles the Well-beloved, and wished that he would live for ever.

But again and again his brain grew weary, and he was forced to leave his kingdom and his people to the care of his uncles, the Lily Princes. Yet for thirty long years,

from 1392 until 1422, the crown of France still rested upon the head of the poor mad King Charles VI.

Isabelle, the king's wife, cared nothing for Charles's suffering, and left him alone to the care of his attendants, by whom he was for a time terribly neglected. His children, too, took no notice of their father.

But Valentina, the beautiful Duchess of Orleans, his brother's wife, was always kind to the poor king, who called her "his fair sister," and was always a little happier on the days that he saw her.

Sometimes the king was able to be amused by a game of cards. The game was little known in France at this time, though Philip of Valois had learned it in his day. The play, where the scenes were usually taken from Bible stories, also interested Charles. These sacred plays were called "Mystery Plays."

At first the Dukes of Burgundy and Berri were sorry for their nephew. And, indeed, to see him was a piteous sight. But soon they could not help being glad that they would once again be able to govern France.

They put aside the claim of the king's brother, the Duke of Orleans, and made themselves regents of the kingdom. Often they would persuade the poor mad king to sign measures which they wished to become law, but which Charles, had he known what he was doing, would never have signed.

Yet the people never lost their trust in their king. They continued to call him the Well-beloved, and believed that were he but able to rule, justice would again be done in the land.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE TWO LILY PRINCES

During the next ten years France was ruled by the Dukes of Burgundy and Berri.

The Lily Princes wished to remain at peace with England, so they encouraged Richard II., son of the Black Prince, to ask for the hand of little Isabelle, the daughter of Charles VI.

Isabelle was only ten years old, but she was a wise little princess, who early learned to speak with courtly ease. The English ambassador, who had come to France on his master's behalf, kneeling before the child, said, "Madame, please God you shall be our sovereign lady and Queen of England."

Whereupon the maiden answered, "If it please God and my lord and father that I should be Queen of England, I would be willingly, for I have certainly been told that I should then be a great lady."

In March 1396 Richard II. and Isabelle were married, and a truce was then signed which was to last for twenty-eight years. But three years later King Richard was deposed, and Henry Bolingbroke then became Henry IV. of England. Isabelle was sent back to France.

Ten years passed, and then Charles VI., being a little better, determined that his brother the Duke of Orleans should become regent, as was his right. But Orleans taxed the people so heavily that they turned to the Duke of Burgundy, who loved France, and cared for the rights of the citizens. Orleans was forced to retire. Even the

king, when he was well, agreed that after all it was better that his uncle should again become regent. From this time, however, the Duke of Burgundy and his nephew, the Duke of Orleans, were rivals and hated one another.

Unhappily, soon after this, Philip, Duke of Burgundy, died, and his son John the Fearless became duke. John hated Louis of Orleans even more than his father had done, and was determined to become regent in his stead.

At first the Duke of Orleans proved so much more powerful than John the Fearless that John was persuaded to make peace with his rival. But it was not a real peace, though the two dukes swore to be friends, heard Mass, and took the Sacrament together in November, 1409.

Before the winter was over, John, Duke of Burgundy, broke his vow of friendship, and that in a most treacherous manner.

For one evening the Duke of Orleans, after having dined with Queen Isabelle, was riding home, attended only by two squires and a few servants carrying torches, when suddenly eighteen or twenty armed men rushed out of an alley in which they had been hiding, and attacked the duke, shouting, "Death! death!"

Haughty and indignant, Louis demanded what was the matter. Then, thinking that his name would cow the rough fellows, who had probably mistaken him for an enemy of their own, he said, "I am the Duke of Orleans."

"It is he whom we seek," was the unexpected answer, and in a moment the ruffians had struck the duke to the ground and slain him.

The Duke of Burgundy did not hide that the terrible deed had been done by his order. After confessing it to the Duke of Berri, he mounted his horse and, leaving Paris behind him, rode off unhindered to Burgundy.

But he did not stay there long. If he had ridden away for safety, he soon found he had nothing to fear in the capital. The citizens of Paris, who had hated the Duke

of Orleans, were glad that he could trouble them no more; while for the Duke of Burgundy who had slain him, they had nothing but gratitude. Even the poor mad king said he was not angry with John the Fearless for murdering his brother, but perhaps he hardly knew what he was saying.

There was only one who really mourned the death of the Duke of Orleans, and that was his beautiful wife, Valentina, the lady who was always kind to the poor weak king.

She threw herself weeping at the feet of Charles, and demanded that her husband's murderer should be punished. The king wept with his "fair sister," but he had no power to help her.

Meanwhile, the Duke of Burgundy came back to Paris, and with him were a thousand men-at-arms. The people greeted him with joy, shouting lustily, "Long live the Duke of Burgundy!"

Being sure of the people, the duke, so confident he was, then wrote his own pardon, and easily persuaded King Charles to sign it. Charles even received him kindly, but warned the duke to guard himself against those who would never forgive his crime. To which the duke proudly answered, that "as long as he stood in the king's good graces he did not fear any man living."

There was certainly nothing to fear either from the king or the people. But Queen Isabelle had always been on good terms with the Duke of Orleans, and the duke determined to win her favor. In this, too, he was successful, and through the queen's goodwill he gained possession of Charles, the young dauphin.

But John the Fearless had an enemy, and that a determined one. This was the son of the man whom he had killed, Charles, the young Duke of Orleans.

Charles had married the daughter of Bernard of Armagnac, a count who had great power in the south of

France. He, along with the Duke of Berri and other nobles, joined the Duke of Orleans in his struggle against John the Fearless.

As the Count of Armagnac was the leader of the Orleans party, those who followed him were called "Armagnacs." First one party was in power and then the other, and for many years the story of France is the story of the cruel deeds done by the Burgundians and the Armagnacs.

At length, in 1414, things began to go badly with the Duke of Burgundy. His followers were driven out of Paris, and even out of their own provinces, while the duke himself fled into Flanders, where he was forced to make terms with the Armagnacs.

The dauphin meanwhile was at Paris, enjoying himself too well to give heed to the quarrels of the nobles, and behaving as though he were already king.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT

Edward III., King of England, had, as you remember, conquered a large part of France. Before his death, however, many of the towns and provinces he had won were retaken by the French, while during the reigns of Richard II. and Henry IV. England lost all that was left of her possessions in France save Calais.

Henry V., who in 1413 became King of England, determined to win back these French possessions.

He disliked the dauphin, who, shortly after Henry had become king, had sent him a present of tennis balls, with a message that it would be well for him to stay at home and amuse himself with these, rather than seek to win a kingdom in France. Henry also knew that France was so weakened by the quarrels of her nobles among themselves, that she had little strength to resist a foreign foe.

The King of England therefore sent to France to ask for the hand of Catherine, daughter of Charles VI., and to demand as her dowry the three important provinces of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou, as well as a large sum of money. Henry intended, if his demand was granted, to keep peace with France; if it was not granted, he meant to declare war. But crushed as the French were by the struggles of their nobles, they were not so crushed as to agree to Henry's proposals. The king therefore proclaimed war against France, and in August 1415 he sailed up the Seine and landed at Harfleur, which he at once besieged.

For five weeks the town held out, thinking each day

that the royal army, which was now commanded by the Constable d'Albret, would come to its aid. But as no help came, the town was forced to surrender to the English, who themselves were more worn out by the siege than the French suspected. Many of Henry's soldiers had indeed gone back to England ill, many more had died from fever, while those who were left were in no fit state to fight.

Henry, however, would neither stay in Harfleur nor return to England. With his army, which was now a small one, he made up his mind to march through Normandy, as English kings had done before. When he reached Calais he would take his soldiers back to England.

So the men set out on their dreary march, and each day they became more tired and weak, for it was impossible to get food. The French had burned all the farms in the district, and carried off all the stores of food and wine that they could find. Yet tired and hungry as they were, the English struggled on, wet to the skin by the heavy rains of autumn, for it was already the month of October. The country through which they marched seemed utterly deserted; not a sign of the French army was to be seen.

But the French had been roused by the fall of Harfleur, and they had assembled a large army, nearly five times as large as the English.

Charles VI., who was less mad than usual, wished to march with his army, but the Duke of Berri would allow neither the king nor the dauphin to be on the battlefield.

"Better lose the battle," he said, "than lose the battle and the king." For the duke had been at the battle of Poitiers in 1356, and remembered how on that terrible day King John had been taken prisoner.

Meanwhile, Henry was within forty miles of Calais, having only once caught sight of the French in the distance. Now, on October 24, 1415, he found that the army in all its strength had taken up its position between him

and Calais. It was plain that, tired and hungry as the English were, a battle would have to be fought before they could reach their haven.

The constable sent a messenger to the English king to ask him when, and at what place, he would be willing to engage in battle. Henry v., regardless of the miserable state of his army, sent back a defiant answer.

"Tell your master," said the king to the constable's messenger, "I do not shut myself up in walled towns. I shall be found at any time and anywhere ready to fight if any attempt is made to cut off my march."

On October 25, 1415, the battle accordingly took place, near the little village of Agincourt.

The evening before the battle the French created five hundred new knights. These spent the long hours until dawn on horseback, in their heavy armor, while the rain fell in torrents, soaking the ground around them. In the morning the new-made knights were as tired as though they had already fought a battle.

As the rain beat down upon the English camp, the soldiers rolled up the banners to keep them dry, the archers carefully put new cords to their bows, while stakes were driven into the marshy ground to check the first attack of the French cavalry. Then the soldiers confessed their sins, and after praying to God, lay down to rest on beds of straw. Not a sound was heard in the English camp, for the king had ordered silence. A knight if he disobeyed would lose his horse, a soldier his right ear.

With the dawn the English could see the great numbers of the French army, and one knight said to another, "It were well if we had ten thousand archers from merry England with us to-day." "Nay," said the king, who had heard the knight's words, "I would not have one more. It is God who hath appointed our number." While to the officer who came to tell him the exact number of the foe, Henry with his indomitable spirit answered only, "There

are enough to be killed, enough to be taken prisoners, and enough to flee."

As the day grew light, the French cavalry was ordered to attack the English archers. They dashed forward bravely, but their horses soon stuck fast in the muddy ground. Making desperate efforts to struggle on, the poor beasts but sunk the deeper in the mire. And all the while the English archers were pouring in upon them an unceasing shower of arrows.

At length a portion of the French cavalry reached the enemy's lines, only to find their horses driven upon the stakes which had been fixed in the ground by the English soldiers.

Wounded by the stakes, pierced by the arrows, the frightened animals turned and plunged madly back among the French foot-soldiers, throwing them into utter confusion.

Then down upon the surging mass of wounded men and frightened beasts came the English, armed with axes, clubs, swords. At the sight a panic overtook the French army, and in complete dismay all who could fled from the field.

Never did a more complete defeat overtake the French than on the field of Agincourt. Little quarter was given, yet the number of prisoners was great. As the battle drew to a close, a report spread that the Duke of Brittany, with a large force, had come to the help of the French.

King Henry, fearing that his prisoners would be in the way, then gave orders that these hapless, unarmed soldiers should at once be killed. And this cruel order has ever been a blot upon the fair fame of Henry v., King of England.

On the battlefield lay slain, their banners by their sides, many of the nobles of France. The constable also had perished, while among the prisoners of high birth were the Duke of Orleans and the Duke of Bourbon.

Henry was now free to march on toward Calais with the brave army that had wellnigh forgotten its weariness in the joy of victory.

On the way a halt was called, and the king sent bread and wine to his prisoner, the Duke of Orleans. But the duke, though wounded and faint, refused to eat or drink. Then Henry himself went to see him, and begged him to eat, but still the prisoner refused, saying he wished to fast.

"Cousin," said the king, "make good cheer. If God has granted me grace to gain the victory, I know it is not owing to my deserts. I believe that God wished to punish the French. And if all I have heard is true, it is no wonder, for, they say, never were seen disorders and sins like what are going on in France just now. Surely God did well to be angry."

A little later King Henry reached Calais and sailed for England, where he and his victorious army were greeted with great joy by the citizens of London.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE BABY-KING OF FRANCE

Soon after the battle of Agincourt the dauphin died; then the king's second son, John, also died—of poison, people whispered. Prince John had been a friend of the Duke of Burgundy, and that alone was enough to make people mutter that the prince had been poisoned by the Armagnacs. They would certainly see to it that no friend of the Burgundian should rule over France.

Charles, the king's youngest son, a boy of fourteen, now became Dauphin. He was an Armagnac, and as this party was the most powerful at the time, all was well with him. The Count of Armagnac took the title of Constable, and ruled France for the young prince.

One of the count's first acts was to imprison Queen Isabelle, who by her wicked conduct did much harm to the kingdom. In 1417, however, she escaped by the help of John, Duke of Burgundy, and from that day she used all her influence on the side of the Burgundians.

The constable ruled Paris better than it had been ruled for years, yet his hand was an iron hand, and before long the citizens grew angry because the count was so stern and showed so little pity. Fickle as ever, they began to think that perhaps after all Queen Isabelle and the Burgundians might prove more gentle rulers.

So in 1418 the citizens opened the gates of Paris to the Burgundians, who poured into the city and slew the Armagnacs, sparing neither women nor little children. The constable was brutally torn to pieces by the angry

mob, and Charles the Dauphin barely escaped with his life.

The Duke of Burgundy had not been with his followers when they entered Paris. As soon as he heard of their violence and the fury of the citizens, he hastened to the capital, but too late to do much good, even had he tried.

Henry v. meanwhile had again come to France with an army, and was besieging the town of Rouen.

John, Duke of Burgundy, who was now ruler of Paris, if not of France, sent an army to relieve the city, but after three months it fell into the hands of the English. Henry at once hastened towards the capital. Then at length the Duke of Burgundy, for the sake of his country, put aside his feud with the Armagnacs. He determined to join them and the dauphin, that together they might save France from falling into the hands of the English and being ruled by an English king.

The dauphin was but a boy, and when he heard that the Duke of Burgundy wished to make peace with him, he did as his courtiers advised. He asked John the Fearless to meet him, that they might discuss their plans together, at the bridge of Montereau, which crossed the river Seine.

Duke John agreed to go to Montereau. Accordingly, a wooden enclosure was built on the middle of the bridge, in which the dauphin and the duke might meet.

Usually a barrier was placed within such an enclosure, lest by any chance a quarrel should arise and swords should thoughtlessly be drawn. At Montereau, alas, no barrier was erected.

A sense of foreboding was heavy upon the followers of the duke. They entreated him not to meet the dauphin; they warned him that the Armagnacs were not to be trusted. Suppose he was taken prisoner, suppose they should attempt to take his life?

But the duke laughed at their fears, or pretended to do so.

"It is my duty," he told his followers, "to risk my person in order to get so great a blessing as peace. Peace being made, I will take the men of my lord the dauphin to go and fight the English."

In July 1419 the meeting at length took place. The dauphin, it was easy to see, had been encouraged by his advisers to be angry. Almost at once when he saw the duke, Charles began to reproach him for not coming earlier to Montereau. He accused him of allowing the English to reach Paris, and many other complaints he made against the man who had risked his life that his country might be saved.

"You have been wanting in your duty," said the dauphin.

"My lord," answered the duke, "I have done only what it was my duty to do."

But still Charles continued to upbraid him, when suddenly one of the Armagnacs who was with the dauphin raised his battle-ax and struck the duke to the ground.

All was at once in confusion. The dauphin hastily withdrew, but the Armagnacs who had been waiting at one side of the bridge now rushed across to the other side where the Burgundians were expecting their master, and soon put them to flight.

Thus after many years the cruel murder of Louis, Duke of Orleans, was avenged upon the noble Duke John the Fearless, who, whatever his faults, had at least loved his country enough to risk his life for her sake.

Philip, the son of John the Fearless, now became Duke of Burgundy. He determined to avenge his father's death, and at once began to fight against the Armagnacs. He also, along with Queen Isabelle, allied himself with the English.

The people of Paris were as eager as the new Duke of Burgundy to have nothing to do with the dauphin or his chosen friends the Armagnacs. The crime they had committed made the citizens wish rather to have Henry, King

of England, to rule over them than the Dauphin and his evil counselors.

Henry was not slow to seize the favorable moment to enter into a treaty with the citizens of Paris.

So the important Treaty of Troyes was signed on May 21, 1420. It declared that on the death of the poor mad king Charles VI., Henry V. of England should become King of France. It also said among other things that Henry should at once marry Catherine, the daughter of Charles VI.

On June 2, 1420, Henry V. therefore entered Paris, and was married to Catherine.

For two years the king and queen held their court in the capital, and during these years Henry ruled justly and well, and restored order to the city, and in part at least to France.

But in August, 1422, Henry V. died, leaving behind him a little son, nine months old, who was also named Henry.

Less than two months later, Charles VI., the poor mad King of France, also died.

While his body lay in state many of his subjects went to lament over him. Their love for Charles had never failed.

"Ah, dear prince," they cried, "never shall we have any so good as thou wert; never shall we see thee more. Since thou dost leave us, we shall never have aught but wars and troubles. As for thee, thou goest to thy rest; as for us, we remain in tribulation and sorrow."

When the service at the tomb of Charles VI. was ended, English heralds proclaimed the tiny baby boy, son of Henry V., King of France and England.

But as the little king, Henry VI., would not be able to rule for many a long year to come, his uncle, the Duke of Bedford, became regent, and ruled France for his little nephew.

Six days after his father's death, Charles the Dauphin also took the title of King, going to the chapel of Mehun,

that he might begin to reign as Charles VII. with the blessing of the priests.

There were now two kings in France: Henry VI., the baby-king of Paris, and Charles VII., the King of Bourges, as the French called him in scorn of his claim to be King of France.

The north of the country was in the hands of the English and the Burgundians, but south of the river Loire the country was loyal to the dauphin.

In the next chapters I will tell you the strange way by which Charles the Dauphin did, at length, actually become King, not only of Bourges, but of the whole kingdom of France.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE SIEGE OF ORLEANS

You have already heard a little about Charles when he was the dauphin, but listen now to what an old chronicler writes of him after he had become king.

"Charles VII.," he says, "was a handsome prince, and compassionate toward poor folk; but he did not readily put on his harness, and he had no heart for war if he could do without it." By "harness" the chronicler meant "armor."

It was the greatest pity in the world that Charles VII. had "no heart for war," for war was inevitable if the English were to be turned out of the country, and Charles was ever to claim his true inheritance as King of France.

But as in truth he had "no heart for war," the King of Bourges wandered aimlessly about France, with only a few attendants, sometimes fleeing before the English, sometimes forced to fight them with what army he could collect from his loyal subjects in the south.

It was not only the English who stood in Charles's way, but their allies the Burgundians, without whose help the English would have been too weak to hold France for their baby-king.

Queen Isabelle, the dauphin's mother, had, you remember, also joined the Burgundians, and she did nothing to help her son's cause.

Charles was in a miserable condition. Sometimes he had not even enough money to pay for a pair of boots. He was so unhappy that he often dreamed that he could not really be the king's son, and the true heir to the throne,

and almost he would make up his mind to flee to Spain, and think no more about the kingdom he had lost.

While Charles idled and dreamed, the English were active and wide awake. In October 1428 they determined to besiege Orleans, on the banks of the river Loire, which was, after Paris and Rouen, the most important city in the kingdom. It would indeed be a bitter blow to the cause of Charles VII. should he lose Orleans. For it was the key to the south, and should it be taken by the English, the Royalist party would almost certainly be overthrown.

When the Duke of Bedford ordered the Earl of Salisbury, who had come from England with reënforcements, to lay siege to Orleans, the French were without allies, without any great leader.

But the citizens in Orleans were all loyal, and determined to defend their city. They had a garrison of about twelve thousand men, and the reckless soldier, La Hire, as well as the brave Dunois, of whom you will hear more, hastened to the help of the besieged town. Of the stout La Hire it is told that, one day as he was hurrying to a battlefield, he met a priest and begged to be absolved from his sins. But when the priest bade him confess, La Hire refused, saying his sins were many and his time was short. So without further remonstrance the priest gave the rough captain the absolution he desired.

La Hire then folded his hands and prayed: "God, I pray Thee to do for La Hire this day as much as Thou wouldst have La Hire do for Thee if he were God and Thou wert La Hire." Then the bold soldier went happily away to his wars.

Meanwhile, the English had stormed and taken a strong fortress called the Tournelles, which commanded one of the bridges across the Loire leading into the city. Here Sir William Glansdale, who was in charge of the Tournelles, placed his guns, so as to control both the bridge and the city.

The Earl of Salisbury, wishing to see the surrounding country, climbed to the top of the fortress. As he stood there, Glansdale by his side, a shot from the city wounded the earl, and soon afterwards he died.

While the Tournelles was the principal fortress, and would have to be taken before the city could be reached, there were thirteen other forts built round the besieged town.

At times the garrison in Orleans was confident enough to sally out and attack the foe. Hearing in February 1429 that the Duke of Bedford was sending provisions from Paris to the English army, the French made up their mind to seize the fresh supply of food before it reached the camp. Among the provisions, I must tell you, were large numbers of barrels filled with herrings.

The English soldiers were warned that they would be attacked, so they halted at a place called Bouvray, placed the wagons with the provisions close together, and hurriedly put round them a paling made of stakes. The French, led by Dunois, the Bastard of Orleans, as he was called, fired at the enclosure, but the English never stirred.

Then the French, reckless as ever, attacked the little camp. This was what the English had hoped they would do. At close quarters they were more than a match for their foes, and the French were soon beaten and flying in all directions. Dunois was wounded as well as two or three hundred of his men.

This fight was called not only the Battle of Bouvray, but more often the Battle of the Herrings, for the barrels had been shattered, and the fish which they had held was strewn on the ground.

The citizens of Orleans were discouraged by this defeat. Moreover, to add to their distress, the Archbishop of Rheims who had been with them, as well as many nobles, now left the city.

In their despair the people offered to give up the town

to the Duke of Burgundy on condition that the Duke of Bedford with his English army would withdraw.

The Duke of Burgundy was already growing tired of his English alliance, and would have accepted the citizens' offer, but Bedford was indignant when the duke asked him to raise the siege. "I do not care to beat the bushes for another to get the birds," he said.

This answer made the Duke of Burgundy so angry that he at once withdrew his forces, so that the English suffered greatly by the quarrel between the two dukes.

Had the citizens of Orleans but known the feeling in the English camp, they might have made a great effort and forced the besiegers to withdraw. For the soldiers were tired after a winter spent more or less in the trenches, and they knew that without the Burgundian troops they could not take Orleans, although they might still be able to prolong the siege.

To add to the gloom in the English camp, strange rumors now reached them of one calling herself Joan the Maid, who had promised the French king that she would raise the siege of Orleans.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

JOAN SEES THE DAUPHIN

"Sweet she is in words and deeds
Fair and white as the white rose."

THESE simple lines were once written in an old Mystery Play called *The Siege of Orleans,* to describe the maid Jeanne d'Arc, or, as we call her in our language, Joan Darc.

We know, too, that "her face was glad and smiling," until her work was done and she was thrown into prison. There, among the rough soldiers who guarded her, the light faded from her eyes, and deep lines of pain were engraved on the face of the fearless maid.

Joan Darc was born in the little village of Domremy, on January 6, 1412. Domremy is in the valley of the river Meuse, on the outskirts of France. The villages in this district were loyal to the Dauphin Charles, for so they called Charles VII., seeing that he had not yet been crowned at Rheims, where the holy oil was kept with which it was the custom to anoint the kings of France. They hated the Burgundians, too, because they had joined the English, and were fighting against their country and their king.

Joan, the little maid, who lived in Domremy, was a simple, joyous child, playing merrily with the boys and girls of the village; learning, as did her friends, to spin, to sew, to cook, to hoe.

Near the village was a forest, and Joan, in spite of her love of play, would sometimes steal away from her companions, and sit quietly under the shade of the great oak

trees, dreaming her childish dreams. The birds came and perched on her head, on her arms, or fed from her hands, so quiet she sat, so still.

At other times her little friends would be with her as she went into the wood to sing and eat cakes under a beech tree which was known as the "Ladies' Tree" or the "Fairies' Tree," and close to which was a beautiful well of clear, cold water, out of which the children would drink.

Before she was nine years old Joan became a simple little shepherdess, guarding her father's sheep on the common, which lay close to the village.

Sometimes the quiet life of the little maid was disturbed. Roving bands of English and Burgundians would come to the neighborhood of Domremy.

Then Joan's father, with five or six of his friends, would hire a strong castle that was uninhabited, and use it as a fortress for themselves and their cattle.

To this refuge they would hasten at the approach of their enemies, driving before them their pigs, their sheep, their cows.

In the castle they were safe, but once at least, when they ventured back to their homes, the villagers found that their houses had been plundered, their church burned to the ground.

The lads of Domremy, too, would fight miniature battles with the lads of the Burgundian villages, and sometimes they would come home bruised and bleeding from the fight.

Then Joan, seeing them wounded, would weep, and at the same time set herself to wash and bind up the bruises of her comrades.

Moreover, when, as would happen at times, fugitives from the English sought shelter at Domremy, Joan, the little maid, who was ever pitiful to suffering, would give her bed to a soldier and herself sleep in the barn.

From these passing guests Joan would hear of the sorrows of Charles the Dauphin, of the misery of the French people.

Little by little a great pity for France welled up in the heart of the child.

As she grew older Joan would often go to church while her companions went to dance; she was even to be found there when her parents thought that she was in the fields tending the sheep.

The altar of the church she would ofttimes deck with the wild flowers she had plucked in the wood, while the sound of the church bells grew ever sweeter in her ears.

Like many another child Joan loved the saints, of whom she had heard from the village pastor. St. Catherine and St. Margaret were those she loved the best, along with St. Michael, the patron or guardian of a castle in Normandy which was called by his name.

But from thinking of the saints, Joan's thoughts would wander to the dauphin. She would muse on his troubles, and on how the false queen, his mother, had forsaken him and joined his enemies, the Burgundians. And an old saying she had often heard would steal into her mind, "France, lost by a woman, shall be saved by a woman."

Moreover, the woman who was to save France was to come, so said the ancient prophecy, from her own countryside.

"Ah, blessed maid," thought Joan, "who shall deliver France from her enemies."

In 1425, when Joan was thirteen years old, a strange thing happened.

As the maid walked at noontide in her father's garden, under the glow of the summer skies, suddenly a light, brighter than that of the sun, shone upon her, and at the same time she heard a voice saying, "Joan, the Lord God hath chosen thee to save France, to go to the aid of the King of France, and thou shalt restore to him his kingdom." At first Joan, seeing the light, hearing the voice, was afraid. But her

fear soon passed away, for "it was a worthy voice" to which she listened.

When the voice spoke a second time Joan saw that there were angels in the midst of the dazzling light. The great St. Michael was looking down upon the maid, and the saints whom she loved, St. Catherine and St. Margaret, were there, "crowned with fair crowns."

They also spoke to her, and their voices were ever kind and gentle.

"When they departed from me," said Joan, "I wept, and would fain have had them take me with them." Again and again during the next five years her "voices," as Joan called them, spoke to her, and always they said, "Be a good child and wise, and thou shalt save France."

And when she pleaded, "I am a poor girl who cannot ride or be a leader in war," the heavenly voices answered ever, "Be a good girl, Joan, and wise, and thou shalt save France."

At length, when she was seventeen years old, her voices told the maid plainly that the time was come that she should go to France.

It was hard for Joan to leave her father and mother, and the quiet shepherd life to which she was used. But at least she knew just what she was to do, for her voices spoke quite clearly. She was to dress as a boy and go to deliver Orleans, which town was in danger of being taken by the English. Then, when the siege of Orleans was raised, the maid was to lead the dauphin to Rheims, that there he might be anointed with holy oil, and be crowned King of France. To do this great work, the voices told Joan that she would have no longer than a year.

Until now Joan had spoken to no one of her voices. If she was to leave her home, however, it was necessary to tell her father everything.

But he, when he had heard her tale, was both angry and dismayed. He vowed that he would rather drown his

daughter in the Meuse than see her leave her home and journey through the country with rough soldiers as her companions.

Nevertheless Joan, still hearing her voices bid her go into France, left her home, not daring to say good-by even to her little friend Hauvrette, lest she should falter in her plan.

The maid went first to Robert de Baudricourt, captain of the town of Vaucouleurs, which was loyal to the dauphin. She hoped that when the captain heard her story he would send her to Charles.

But when in July 1428 she reached Vaucouleurs, and told Baudricourt that she had come to succor France, the rough captain laughed at her words. A simple peasant girl succor France! It was a foolish thought.

"I come on behalf of my Lord," cried the maid fearlessly, "to bid you send word to the dauphin to keep himself well in hand and not give battle to his foes, for my Lord will presently give him succor."

"Who is thy lord?" asked Baudricourt.

"The King of Heaven," answered Joan.

But again the rough captain laughed, and bade the maid go home to watch her sheep.

So Joan went home, but in October she heard how Orleans was not only besieged, but in danger of falling into the hands of the English.

The maid waited until the new year dawned, then early in January 1429 she went again to Vaucouleurs to speak with Robert de Baudricourt.

"I must go to Orleans to raise the siege," she said. "I will go, should I have to wear off my legs to the knee." Yet still Baudricourt would have nothing to do with the maid.

For three weeks Joan lodged in Vaucouleurs, in the house of a wheelwright, spinning with his wife, and often going to church to pray.

Then one day a knight, named John of Metz, who knew Joan's father and mother, met the maid.

"What do you here, my dear?" he asked.

"I am come hither," answered Joan, "to speak to Robert de Baudricourt that he may take me, or be pleased to have me taken, to the dauphin, but he pays no heed to me or my words. Assuredly I had rather be spinning beside my poor mother . . . but I must go and do the work, because my Lord wills it."

"Who is your lord?" asked John of Metz, even as Baudricourt had done.

"The Lord God," answered Joan.

"By my faith," said the knight, overcome by the maid's quiet words and seizing her hands—"by my faith I will take you to the king, God helping. When will you set out?"

"Rather now than to-morrow," said Joan quickly, "rather to-morrow than later."

Not long after this Baudricourt also was won. For on February 12, 1429, Joan went again to the captain and said, "In God's name you are too slow in sending me; for this day, near Orleans, a great disaster has befallen the gentle dauphin, and worse he will have unless you send me to him."

Now a few days later Baudricourt heard that on the very day that Joan spoke these words the French had been defeated at the battle of the Herrings. Then the rough captain began to think that perhaps after all Joan Darc was sent by God to succor France. He was soon as eager as John of Metz to send her to the king.

As her voices had bidden her, Joan now laid aside her rough red peasant garments to dress as a boy.

Two knights and the good folk of Vaucouleurs willingly supplied the maid with all she needed for the journey to the king—a gray tunic, black hose, a horse. Then cutting her long black hair short, Joan set out on February 25,

1429, with an escort for Chinon, where the Dauphin was holding his court.

Robert de Baudricourt, as he bade the maid farewell, gave her a sword, saying, "Away then, Joan, and come what may."

Rumors of the maid had, you remember, reached Orleans. When it was known that Joan was really on her way to Chinon, the garrison plucked up courage. Strange as it may seem, the French soldiers had already faith in the maid, and believed that she would raise the siege of Orleans.

CHAPTER XXXIX

JOAN RELIEVES ORLEANS

EARLY in March 1429 Joan had reached Chinon, and Charles, in spite of the remonstrances of his favorites, had determined to receive the peasant girl from Domremy.

It was evening, and the great hall of the palace was bright with candle light when Joan appeared.

The dauphin had laid aside his royal robes, and stood among three hundred of his knights, each clad more richly than was he.

But Joan, without a sign of bewilderment, walked straight to Charles, knelt at his feet, and spoke to him "humbly and simply like a poor little shepherdess." "Gentle dauphin, God grant you a good life," she said.

Charles at first denied that he was the dauphin, but the maid was not to be deceived. "In God's name," she cried, "it is you and none other."

Then as Charles was silent, Joan said, "Gentle dauphin, my name is Joan the Maid; the King of Heaven sendeth you word by me that you shall be anointed and crowned in the city of Rheims before the year is ended."

Gladly would Charles have believed that what the maid said would really come to pass, yet he hesitated, and wondered how it could be.

Joan, seeing that Charles was afraid to trust her, begged to speak with him alone, saying that she would give him a sign which would make it impossible for him to doubt her words.

A few days later Charles saw Joan alone, but what she then said to the dauphin the maid would never tell. Even when in days to come her judge threatened her with torture, trying thus to wring her secret from her, Joan never faltered. She had promised her saints not to tell, and she was silent to the end.

But in after-years Charles VII. told the secret to a friend, so that now we know the sign the maid brought to the dauphin.

You remember that Charles was sometimes so unhappy that he could not believe that he was the true heir to the throne of France. One day, in his misery, he had entered a chapel, and prayed silently to God to give him his kingdom if he were in truth the dead king's eldest son.

This prayer, of which none could know save God alone, Joan recalled to the dauphin's memory. She said that God had answered this prayer by sending her, the maid, to assure him that he was the true heir to the throne; and, after raising the siege of Orleans, to lead him to Rheims to be crowned.

Then the dauphin no longer doubted Joan, yet still he was not ready to send her to raise the siege, which was the first task given her to do.

Instead, the dauphin sent the eager maid to Poitiers, to be examined by the bishops and priests.

For six weary weeks Joan was questioned by the learned men. But they could find no fault with her answers, and so at length they sent her back to Charles, telling him that they could find "naught but goodness in her."

"I am come on behalf of the King of Heaven to cause the siege of Orleans to be raised," Joan had said again and again, and now neither Charles nor the bishops hesitated. The maid should go to Orleans.

It was indeed time that something should be done for the besieged city. Already more than once Dunois had sent to Charles to beg for help which had never come.

But now the maid was to march to Orleans, and hearts beat fast, hopes rose high in the city.

It was easy to raise an army. The French soldiers were eager to follow the maid, never doubting that she would lead them to victory.

At Chinon Joan had already won the friendship of the Duke of Alençon. He and the rough and reckless La Hire had pledged themselves to follow wherever she should lead.

Clad in white armor, which Charles had ordered to be made for her, and seated on a great black horse, Joan was at length ready to set out with her army.

Charles wished to give his girl-captain a sword, but there was only one sword that Joan cared to wear. She begged the king to send for it to a chapel dedicated to St. Catherine. There, near the altar, it lay buried, an old and rusty sword, on which were carved five crosses, as her voices had said. The sword was found and brought to the maid, who wore it in battle but used it little. For her heart was tender even on the battlefield, and never did she slay any.

But it was her banner that Joan loved. It was made of white linen, and on it were embroidered the Lilies of France, and across the front were inscribed the simple words, *Jésus Maria.*

Mounted on her black horse, Joan and her army marched toward Orleans. She was a strict captain, allowing no drinking, no swearing among the soldiers or their leaders. Even the rough La Hire, though with difficulty, ceased to use the ugly words that came so easily to his lips.

Before the army marched a band of priests, who sang hymns in which the soldiers joined as they drew nearer and nearer to the besieged city.

Close to Orleans Joan ordered the army to halt while she sent a mesage to the English, bidding them to raise the siege or she would come and force them to do so.

As the English took no notice of her message, Joan marched on, whereupon the English fled before the maid,

whom already they called a witch, leaving one of their forts deserted.

Joan, with part of her army, passed safely into the city, the citizens wild with joy coming out to meet their deliverer. Straight on through the happy crowd rode the maid, until she reached the cathedral, where she dismounted, and entering gave thanks to God for bringing her to Orleans.

When night came the maid, being tired with the excitement of the day, went to bed and slept. But erelong the tramp of horses, the roar of guns, awoke her. Quickly she arose, dressed and armed herself; then hastening down to her page she chided him, saying, "Ah, naughty boy, not to come and tell me that the blood of France was being shed. Come, quick, my horse!"

It was brought and, mounting, Joan galloped along the paved streets so fiercely that sparks darted from the hoofs of her horse. To the amazement of all she rode straight to the place where the skirmish was taking place, as though she had all her life known the way.

Joan entered Orleans on April 29, 1429. Five days later she led her soldiers out to attack one of the English forts, and took it. Two days passed, and again she led her men to attack another fort. But this time the struggle was more fierce, the English forcing the French to withdraw, mocking the while at the maid as she slowly retired.

Joan, hearing their words, grew angry, rallied her men, and once again made a determined attack upon the fort. With the maid was La Hire, the bravest and roughest of her captains.

The English, who a few moments before had been sure of victory, were seized with panic at the fresh onslaught, and fled, leaving the fortress in the hands of the French. In this assault Joan was wounded, but she paid no heed to her pain.

Many other forts were taken, until at length there

remained only the Tournelles, the strongest of all the English defenses, and, as I told you, the key to the city.

Early on Saturday morning, May 7, 1429, the whole French army crossed the river Loire in boats and joined in the attack on the Tournelles.

The English fought desperately, and the French began to falter. Joan, seeing her soldiers fall back, jumped into a ditch, seized a ladder, placed it against the wall of the fort, and began to mount.

At that moment an arrow wounded her in the shoulder. Joan's tears fell and the pain made her feel faint, but almost at once she dashed away her tears and herself pulled the arrow out of her shoulder.

Dunois, seeing that the French were again faltering, ordered the retreat to be sounded, Joan meanwhile having gone aside to pray. Now, however, she came back, and Dunois begged to attack the enemy once more.

Then she mounted her black horse, her banner in her hand, and the English, who had believed she was too badly wounded to fight, saw her again encouraging their enemies.

As for her own followers, when they saw the maid's banner waving in the air, they quickly gathered around it, forgetful of their fears.

Then Joan handed the banner to one of her soldiers, bidding him carry it forward until it touched the walls of the Tournelles.

"Joan, it touches now," cried the soldier.

"Enter, then, for the city is yours," cried the maid. At her words the men scaled the walls, leaped into the fort, and the English were forced to flee.

They rushed to the drawbridge only to find that it had been set on fire by the citizens of Orleans.

Yet they dashed forward, Glansdale and his knights defending the retreat as best they could. But when they too turned to cross through the fire and smoke, the bridge

'ENTER, THEN, FOR THE CITY IS YOURS,' CRIED THE MAID.

gave way, and they and many of their men were thrown into the river and drowned.

To add to the dismay of the English, the citizens of Orleans now flung a plank across the river and swarmed across to join in the attack.

The Tournelles, the last fortress held by the English, was taken.

On the following day, Sunday, May 8th, the English drew themselves up in battle array. The French also mustered their whole army, and for an hour the two forces faced each other, but not a blow was struck.

The French army, by Joan's wish, heard mass in the open air while they faced the foe.

Then the maid, who was eagerly watching the enemy, cried, "See, are the English still waiting to attack us?" The French looked, and could scarcely believe their eyes. For the English had turned and were marching away, their banners flying in the air. The siege of Orleans, begun on October 12, 1428, was raised on May 8, 1429, eight days after the maid had entered the city.

Long and loud pealed the bells as Joan and her army came in triumph into the city. In an ecstasy of joy the citizens crowded around their deliverer, and followed her into the cathedral, where the Te Deum was sung in thankfulness that the siege was ended. From that day Joan was known as the Maid of Orleans.

CHAPTER XL

JOAN LEADS THE DAUPHIN TO RHEIMS

Joan Darc had raised the siege of Orleans. Her next task was to bring the dauphin to Rheims to be crowned.

The maid wasted no time in setting out for Tours, where Charles was spending his days in idle pleasures. His favorites, of whom La Trémouille was the chief, hated Joan, and did all they could to thwart her influence over the dauphin.

On May 13th, three days after she left Orleans, Joan rode into Tours, her banner in her hand, and met the dauphin, for whom she had already done so much.

He, when he saw the maid, "took off his cap and held out his hand to her, and, as it seemed to many, he would fain have kissed her for the joy he felt."

But when Joan begged Charles to go with her to Rheims, he hesitated, saying it would be dangerous to pass through the country, where the English still held many towns. La Trémouille, too, did all in his power to keep the king at Tours.

A month passed, and still Joan had not persuaded the king to start. As the precious days of her single year passed away unused, the brave heart of the maid grew sad. For ever she remembered that her voices had said she had but a year in which to accomplish her tasks.

In June Joan made up her mind to wait no longer for the dauphin. She herself, with her brave captains and soldiers, would clear the way to Rheims.

Jargeau, a town in which the English had sought refuge,

was besieged and taken, as well as other fortresses in the neighborhood held by the English. At Patay, too, soon after, a battle was fought, when the English were utterly beaten, and their commander Talbot was taken prisoner.

After these victories the maid went once more to the dauphin, bidding him come to Rheims, for all the cities on the way were ready to fling open their gates to the true heir to the throne.

And at length Charles yielded, and set out with Joan and her army for Rheims, which they reached in safety on July 16, 1429.

On the following day Charles went in great pomp to the cathedral, where he was crowned King of France, after being anointed with the holy oil by the archbishop. During the ceremony Joan stood close to the dauphin, holding the royal standard in her hands.

When all was over the maid turned to Dunois, who was at her side, and said, "I have accomplished that which my Lord commanded me, to raise the siege of Orleans and have the king crowned. I should like it well if it should please Him to send me back to my father and mother to keep their sheep and their cattle, and to do that which was my wont."

But that, alas! was not to be.

Now that he was a king indeed, Charles wished to reward the Maid of Orleans with royal gifts.

For herself, however, Joan would have nothing, but for her village she was eager to accept the king's bounty, begging him that, for her sake, Domremy might pay no taxes for three hundred years.

The king was pleased to agree to Joan's wish, and from this time, until the reign of Louis XV., the village, not only of Domremy, but also of Greux, which was close to it, paid no taxes "for the sake of the maid."

Until now, save that Charles had greatly tried her

patience, all had gone well with Joan, but from the time of the coronation a cloud began to shadow her "glad and smiling face."

She urged the king to march at once to Paris, but he, influenced again by La Trémouille, refused, and spent his days, as of old, in idleness, or in trying to make terms with the Duke of Burgundy.

Joan had no trust in the duke, and boldly said, "There is no peace possible with him, save at the point of the lance." This, however, Charles did not believe.

Meanwhile, the Duke of Bedford was sending all his soldiers to Paris, lest the king should determine to advance on the city.

Then the maid left Charles, who was loitering now in one town and then in another, and before he had reached St. Denis she had already attacked the walls of Paris, and believed that the city could be taken by storm.

But in one of the assaults Joan was wounded, and although she never flinched and continued to fight in the trenches until midnight, a knight then forced her to retire.

Joan was indignant, but she still believed that on the following day Paris would be in her hands.

By her orders a bridge had been thrown across the Seine, and across this bridge she meant to lead her men to attack the city from another point.

But on the morrow Joan found that by the king's order the bridge had been destroyed, for he was still treating with the Duke of Burgundy, and hoped that the city would be given into his hands without the help of the maid.

Joan was heart-broken when she saw what Charles had done. But no words can tell of her despair when the king, listening to his favorite and longing for peace, forbade the maid to fight any more for six long months.

Poor Joan! slowly and sadly the year that had been hers passed away.

As May 1430 drew near Joan's voices, which had been silent for a time, spoke to her again, but their words were solemn and sad. Before midsummer she would be in the hands of her enemies, so her voices told her. Little wonder was it if the brave heart of the maid quailed at the thought. For well she knew that if the English captured her, they would tie her to a stake and burn her as a witch, for such indeed they deemed her. It was thus that witches were treated in the days when Joan lived.

The truce was over by the month of May, 1430, and Joan, eager as ever, was in the field once more.

Compiègne, a town that was faithful to Charles, was at this time besieged by a large army of English and Burgundians.

You may wonder that the Burgundians were there, for Charles, as you know, had for some time been making terms with their leader. But the Duke of Burgundy had been false to the King of France, as Joan, and every one save Charles himself, had foreseen that he would be.

The maid determined to go to the help of the besieged city. One night, under cover of the dark, she stole into Compiègne to the great joy of the people, who were sure she would raise the siege, as she had done that of Orleans.

On May 23rd, at dawn, she led out her men, hoping to surprise the enemy. Twice she drove back the Burgundians, but the English came hastening to the help of their allies, and little by little Joan was forced to retreat toward the city.

But before she could reach the drawbridge, the governor of the town, seeing that the enemy was rushing toward it, ordered the bridge to be raised. And, alas, that it must be told, the maid was left among her enemies.

On a gray horse, clad in a scarlet coat, Joan was seen by all. The Burgundians, shouting in triumph, surrounded the maid, and dragged her from her horse.

They asked her to surrender, but she refused, thinking and hoping that they would kill her on the spot.

But the Maid of Orleans was too great a prize to be slain, and erelong the Burgundians sold her to the English, her mortal enemies. Charles VII., to his shame be it told, made no effort to save the maid from her foes.

CHAPTER XLI

THE DEATH OF THE MAID

THE English, having bought Joan, handed her over to the French priests, who hated the maid, and to satisfy their hatred, as also that of the English, they brought her to trial as a witch and a heretic. Among these priests her most cruel enemy was Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais.

Joan would never give her word of honor not to try to escape from prison. Once jumping from a high window she fell to the ground, and there she was found faint, but uninjured, by her enemies.

It was in May that Joan was taken prisoner, and slowly the days and weeks passed until November, when she was taken to Rouen. And because more than once Joan had tried to escape, she was now taken to a castle, and there in the dungeon the brave maid was placed in a cage, with heavy chains upon her feet.

In January 1431 she was brought before Cauchon, who, as he hated her, should never have been made one of her judges, or president of the court.

Week after week the trial lasted, Joan's judges trying in vain to make her deny that she had really heard her voices; trying, too, to make her confess to crimes of which she had never dreamed.

When she had told Cauchon her simple story, and refused to say aught beside, the cruel bishop ordered Joan to be carried into the torture chamber.

"Confess," he cried, "or you shall be bound and tortured."

Yet not for a moment did the maid flinch, but proudly

she answered, "Though you should tear me limb from limb I should tell you nothing more."

Even the Bishop of Beauvais was ashamed as he listened to her unfaltering words, and Joan was taken back to prison unharmed.

Once indeed, worn out by sickness and solitude, Joan denied that she had heard her voices, yet almost at once she was sorry, and said that only weakness had wrung the falsehood from her lips.

But nothing could save the maid. Her judges, with the English to support them, were determined that Joan should die.

And so at length they had their way, and when the maid was but nineteen years old they condemned her to death as a witch and a heretic.

The boy's costume which Joan had worn by the command of her voices was laid aside; and the maid, dressed once again as a girl, was led to the old market-place of Rouen on May 24, 1431.

Lest at the last moment Charles should rouse himself from his base ingratitude, lest La Hire, Dunois, or her friend the Duke of Alençon should swoop down upon the market-place with the soldiers who had followed Joan so often to victory, and carry away their erstwhile comrade from her doom, Joan was surrounded by eight hundred soldiers.

"Rouen, Rouen," cried the maid, as they tied her to the stake, "is it here that I must die? I fear greatly that thou wilt have to suffer for my death."

Then the soldiers placed a paper cap upon her brow, on which was written, "Heretic, relapsed apostate, idolatress."

The maid asked for a cross, and an Englishman handed her one, made roughly of a staff he had broken in twain. She kissed it, and as the cruel flames leaped up around her she called in a clear voice, "Jesus," then, bowing her head, she died. The ashes of the maid were flung into the river Seine, for her enemies feared lest even in death her body should have power to work miracles.

"We are lost, we have killed a saint," said one of the English as he turned away from the terrible scene. And in that he spoke truly, for from the time of the maid's death the power of the English in France grew ever less secure.

Twenty-four years after Joan's death, Charles VII. repented that he had not tried to save the maid.

A new trial took place, and Joan's name was cleared of all the cruel charges that had been brought against it.

In Orleans and in many other towns in France to-day you may see monuments raised to do honor to the maid who delivered France.

There, too, each year on the 8th of May a festival is held, in praise of her who is known as the Maid of Orleans. And now, in the Roman Catholic Church, she is worshiped as a saint.

As I told you, nothing prospered with the English after Joan Darc's death.

In 1435 the Duke of Burgundy signed the Treaty of Arras, by which he forsook the cause of the English and went over to the side of Charles VII.

Paris, too, threw open its gates to Charles VII., who at length, in April 1436, entered his capital as king.

And now Charles roused himself from his indolent, selfish ways, and began to live, as the maid had longed to see him live, for the good of his kingdom. He formed a regular army, so that France in her wars would no longer be forced to depend on her nobles and their vassals for help, or on the bold bands of Free Lances of which I have told you.

As this regular army had to be paid, Charles VII. assembled the States-General, just as our king in such a case would summon his parliament, and asked them to vote sums of money with which the army might be paid.

The nobles did not like the king's new ways. They were no longer allowed to have soldiers of their own, and this made them less able to use the power that was still theirs.

Against the English who were left in the country the

king carried on an active war, until his subjects almost forgot that Charles had ever been indolent.

Towards the end of his reign Charles VII. was saddened by the conduct of his eldest son Louis, for when the nobles tried to resist the king's reforms, Louis took their side against his father.

Charles sent his son into Dauphiny, thinking that he would be too busy there to have time for further plots.

A few years later, however, Louis left Dauphiny and went to the court of the Duke of Burgundy, and then the king grew ever more suspicious of his son. For Louis had gone to a prince who was powerful and at the same time a rival to the King of France.

In July 1453 Charles, with an army which had already won many triumphs under Dunois, besieged Castillon, the last stronghold of the English.

Talbot, the English commander, with a large force came to raise the siege.

A rumor spread that the French were preparing to leave their camp, and Talbot hurried to the town only to find the French awaiting him beneath its walls.

After a fierce struggle Talbot was slain, and his men perished on the spot where their commander's body had fallen.

With Castillon in the hands of the king, the south also was his, and thus by October 1453 the Hundred Years' War was at an end, Calais and Guines being all that was still held by the English.

Save that he was suspicious of his son and the Duke of Burgundy, Charles VII. might now have been content. But he was so fearful of their designs, that he was afraid either to eat or drink, lest they had found means to poison his food or drug his wine.

At length, sad and miserable, after a few days' illness, Charles VII. died in 1461.

CHAPTER XLII

THE LEAGUE OF THE COMMON WEAL

Louis the Dauphin had joined the nobles when they rebelled against his father Charles VII.; then, fearing to trust to his father's promises of forgiveness, he had fled to the Duke of Burgundy. He was still an exile from home when he heard that the king was dead. The news brought the dauphin no regret.

He hastily left Flanders, and returned to Paris to attend his father's funeral. In the afternoon of the same day he was out hunting, as gay as any of his companions. To hunt he wore a royal dress of purple, for the French fashion was to wear black only at the funeral service.

But if Louis did not mourn for his father, most of the nobles were sorry to lose their king. During the last years of his life he had ruled wisely, while Louis, they foresaw, was a headstrong prince, bent on making himeslf more powerful than any of his barons.

Count Dunois, as he turned away from the funeral of Charles VII., murmured the thought that was in the minds of many another noble, "We have lost our master; let each look after himself."

On August 18, 1461, Louis went to Rheims, accompanied by the Duke of Burgundy, who had come to France with the prince to be present at his coronation.

Philip the Duke, seated on a splendid charger, surrounded by his Burgundian archers, was a right royal figure at which to gaze.

And the French turned from him with a dull regret to look at their own future king.

Louis XI., a little man shabbily dressed even on the occasion of his coronation, with cunning eyes and a cruel mouth, which yet at times wore a winning smile, hardly seemed to be a king at all.

Yet the shabby dress, the undignified manners in which he delighted, were but disguises to hide the clever brain which was already busy with many great schemes.

The Duke of Burgundy should scarcely have been asked to the coronation at Rheims, so greatly did he dwarf Louis XI. in his dull gray cape, his face half hidden under a hat, which a chronicler of the time calls a "bad hat," and which was stuck full of little leaden images of the saints. For Louis XI. was, in his own way, a very devout king.

So the people stared first at the duke and then at Louis, and after that they muttered one to the other, "Ah, he is not like our king who wears an old gray coat, and hides his face under his hat, and hates nothing but joy."

When this unkingly-looking king had reigned for some years, his courtiers gave him a strange nickname. The "Universal Spider," they called him, because, like a spider, Louis sat quietly in his palace spinning and spinning his plots, until his web entangled all those whom he wished to get into his power. And he spun so quietly, so persistently, that there were few indeed who could escape from the meshes of his web.

Louis began his reign, as the Count of Dunois had foreseen, by dismissing his father's most trusted counselors. In their places he put Balue, a priest of humble birth, who became a cardinal, his barber Olivier, and Tristan l'Hermite, the hangman.

That the king should give titles to such men, and listen to their advice, made the nobles angry. But their indignation was still more fierce when Louis began to interfere with their pleasures. He forbade them to hunt, even in their

own forests, or to keep hounds, hawking birds, nets or snares, which might be used for hunting.

Louis himself was passionately fond of the chase, and he issued this selfish order that the forests might be free for his own royal pleasure. By such deed Louis XI. made himself bitterly disliked by the barons of his realm.

The middle class, too, learned to distrust and hate their king. At first, it is true, they were charmed, for Louis knew well how to flatter and please.

When the townsfolk, finding themselves taxed more heavily than they thought just, sent deputations to complain to the king, Louis graciously thanked them for telling him their troubles, and promised to reduce the taxes, to restore their ancient liberties.

To the deputation from Rheims the king said, "I have just been passing five years in the countries of my uncle of Burgundy, and there I saw good cities, mighty rich, and full of inhabitants; and folks, well clad, well housed, well off, lacking nothing; the commerce there is great, and the cities there have great privileges. When I came into my own kingdom I saw, on the contrary, houses in ruins, fields without tillage, men and women in rags, faces pinched and pale. It is a great pity," said Louis the king; "my soul is filled with pity at it. All my desire is to apply a remedy thereto, and with God's help we will bring it to pass."

Never were words more fair and gracious. The deputation went home well pleased with their plainly dressed but eloquent king.

But when the time came to collect the taxes at Rheims, the king had apparently forgotten his gracious promises. Officers came as usual to collect the same heavy taxes, whereupon the people were angry and refused to pay.

When Louis heard that the people of Rheims had refused to pay the taxes, he ordered a large number of his soldiers to dress themselves as laborers and artisans, and thus disguised to slip unnoticed into Rheims.

When the soldiers were safely inside the city, they threw off their disguise, and took possession of the town before the citizens had time even to seize their arms.

The ringleaders, who had encouraged the people not to pay their taxes, were slain, and about a hundred of the inhabitants were hanged. Not only Rheims, but many other places were treated in the same way.

After Louis had reigned for about three years, the nobles formed a league to overthrow the monarch's unjust rule. This league was called the "League of the Common Weal"; and Charles the Bold, son of the Duke of Burgundy, was its real leader, although Charles of Berri, the king's heir, took part in it.

Louis, save for the regular army raised by his father, would now have been helpless, for the army of the League actually advanced upon Paris. He was at this time in the south, where he had gone to fight against some of the rebellious nobles.

Hearing that Paris was in danger, the king made terms with the southern nobles, and hastened toward his capital. But the army of the League stopped him near the village of Montlhéry, in July 1465.

Here a fierce battle was fought. The royal army wavered, hearing that the king had fallen. But Louis took off his helmet, crying, "No, my friends, no; I am not dead; defend your king with good courage!"

Hearing his voice the soldiers rallied and fought with new courage, but night fell while the victory was still uncertain.

Louis ordered large fires to be lit in the village of Montlhéry, behind which he encamped with his army.

Charles the Bold, with a mere handful of men, rested outside the village, sheltered by a thick hedge.

As the night wore on, Charles sent out scouts to find where the king had encamped. The scouts saw the fires blazing in the village, and believing that the royal army

was behind the fires, they hastened back to say the king was there.

So Charles drew up his men in battle array lest the enemy should surprise them. But morning dawned and no attack had been made, for while the watch-fires blazed Louis and his army had slipped quietly away, and two days later the king was in Paris. But when the city was afterwards besieged, the king begged the nobles to come to terms.

So in October 1465 the leaders of the Common Weal signed the Peace of Conflans. The king was forced to grant them both lands and positions of trust in the kingdom, and having gained what they wished for themselves, the nobles laid down their arms, paying no further heed to the needs of the people, or the Common Weal.

CHAPTER XLIII

LOUIS XI. VISITS CHARLES THE BOLD

Louis had been forced to sign the Treaty of Conflans, but he meant to win back all that the treaty had yielded as soon as possible, either by force or craft.

His first move was to persuade the parliament of Paris to disown the agreement. This left the king free to march into Normandy, which by the treaty he had given to his brother Charles, and, wresting it from him, to join Normandy again to the kingdom of France.

By the death of Philip, in 1467, Charles the Bold became Duke of Burgundy. He found his hands full, quelling the rebellions which continually broke out among his subjects.

These rebellions, as perhaps Charles guessed, were stirred up and encouraged by King Louis. The French king was growing more powerful than Charles liked. He determined, therefore, to make an alliance with Edward IV. of England, and persuade him to invade France.

As King Louis had a large and well-trained army, he might easily have marched at once against the Duke of Burgundy, and crushed his plans in the bud. But, urged by Cardinal Balue, he determined, instead of fighting, to try to make terms with Charles the Bold.

Nor would the king be persuaded to send an ambassador to arrange matters with his enemy. His vanity whispered to him that his was the only brain that could outwit the duke; and some of his counselors, more especially Balue,

knowing that it would please the king, assured him that it was indeed so.

In due time, therefore, the king sent to ask his enemy for a safe-conduct, to which Charles answered, "My lord, if it is your pleasure to come to this town of Peronne for to see us, I swear to you and promise you, by my faith and on my honor, that you may come, remain, sojourn, and go back safely . . . at your pleasure, as many times as it may please you."

King Louis, having received this letter, set out for Peronne, taking with him, to the dismay of his subjects, only a small escort of his Scottish archers and sixty men-at-arms. When the wiser of his counselors spoke of peril, Louis laughed. Had he not with him the duke's letter of safe-conduct?

As the king approached Peronne, Charles came to the entrance of the town to meet his guest, and bareheaded they embraced one another. Then together they walked through the streets of the town, Louis's hand resting in friendly fashion on the duke's shoulder.

The king was taken to a comfortable house, within sight of the tower of Peronne, where once, said Charles grimly, "a King of France lay prisoner."

It nowise disturbed Louis to hear of the royal prisoner of past years, but when he found that his guards were to be lodged at the other end of the town he liked it little. Still less was he pleased when, looking out of a window, he saw some of his bitterest enemies riding through the streets.

Turning to the duke, he begged that he might be lodged in the castle, for Louis felt that he would be safer under the same roof as his host.

Charles at once gave orders that the king should be moved to the castle, at the same time assuring him that "he had no cause for doubt."

The next day King Louis and the duke were discussing

terms of peace, when they were interrupted by tidings from Liège that roused Charles to fury.

Before Louis had gone to Peronne he had foolishly sent two men to this very town, which belonged to the duke, bidding them encourage the citizens to revolt against their lord. They were to promise the citizens the help of the King of France in their rebellion.

The trouble between the duke and his subjects at Liège was chiefly concerned with the bishop, who was under Charles's protection. He had lately been sent to a town called Tongres, to be safe from the dislike of the citizens of Liège, and was there under the care of a nobleman.

But now the people of Liège, urged by Louis's ambassadors, rose in a body, rushed to Tongres, and (so ran the story which was brought to the duke) killed both the bishop and the nobleman.

Charles had little doubt that it was the King of France who had encouraged the citizens of Liège to revolt. For three days, so great was his anger, he shut himself up in his own rooms, striding up and down in his rage, and crying, "So the king came here only to deceive me! It is he who by his ambassadors excited these bad folk of Liège, but by St. George they shall be severely punished for it, and he himself shall have cause to repent."

For a time it seemed that Louis was hardly likely to leave the castle alive. Orders were given to close the gates of the town as well as every entrance to the castle.

At the end of three days Charles went to see King Louis, who had been kept more or less as a prisoner in his room.

Louis had already tried to appease the angry duke by offering, through Charles's courtiers, to accept any conditions of peace that the duke should propose.

Meanwhile Charles, finding himself in the presence of the king, found it impossible to conceal his anger.

As he spoke his voice trembled with rage and his words were harsh.

"Brother," said Louis, dismayed at the duke's manner, "I am safe, am I not, in your house and your country?"

"Yes, sire," answered Charles, making a violent effort to control his temper; "yes, sire, so safe that if I saw an arrow from a bow coming towards you, I would throw myself in the way to protect you."

The duke then laid a treaty before Louis, asking him if he were willing to sign it.

Louis did not dare to anger his host anew by refusing. But, although he solemnly swore upon a piece of the true Cross, he was no sooner safe in Paris than he did all he could to evade the treaty he had been forced to sign at Peronne.

But there was further penance than signing a treaty before Louis ere he was free to go home. Charles the Bold was going with an army to Liège to punish his rebellious subjects, and he blandly proposed to Louis that he also should go to help him.

You can imagine how unpleasant this would be to Louis. The citizens of Liège had been promised his help, had hung his banners from their walls.

However, the French king could not afford to displease Charles, and he agreed to accompany him.

As they approached the walls of the town, Louis saw his own banners waving in the air, heard his own battle-cry, "Viva France!" ringing in his ears; while the citizens, to their surprise and dismay, saw the false king riding against them with their angry lord.

There was no mistake. The townsfolk looked again. Yes, there was Louis, side by side with Duke Charles; in his hat the Cross of St. Andrew of Burgundy. They not only saw, they heard, for Louis was shouting valiantly, "Hurrah for Duke Charles! Hurrah for Burgundy!"

Surprise was soon lost in indignation, for the citizens

knew that without Louis's aid they were helpless in the hands of their angry master.

The duke was in no mood to show mercy. He first pulled down the walls of the city, and then put many of the inhabitants to death. Only when Liège lay in ruins did Charles allow the King of France to go home.

Louis got safely back to Paris, but he was downcast and disappointed. His journey to Peronne had been a failure.

Cardinal Balue, who had urged the king to visit Charles, had all the while been in the pay of the duke. This Louis had discovered while he was in Peronne, and now that he was safely home again he speedily wreaked his vengeance on his former favorite. He ordered the cardinal to be imprisoned in a cage which he had himself invented. When Balue heard his sentence he knew that it would be hopeless to think of escape. He had planned the cage too skilfully for that to be possible. For ten long years the unfortunate man was thus "snared in the work of his hands," and only when Louis was old and ill was he released by the request of the Pope.

In 1470, about a year after Louis had been at Peronne, he ordered an assembly of notables to meet him at Tours. These notables were all lawyers and magistrates whom the king himself had chosen.

Before these men the king declared that the Duke of Burgundy had not kept his side of the Treaty of Peronne, whereupon the notables said that since the duke had broken faith, he, the king, might well evade his part of the treaty.

Thereupon Louis sent his constable St. Pol to seize some of the duke's border towns. Among these was Amiens. Many other towns also, frightened by Charles's severity to the inhabitants of Liège, seemed inclined to go over to the French king.

Charles the Bold, seeing that in the meantime the king had got the upper hand, was forced to lay aside his pride, and sign a truce with Louis at Amiens in 1471.

The constable St. Pol meanwhile, bent on gaining more power for himself, tried to form a new league against the king. He and the Duke of Brittany even encouraged Louis's enemy, Charles the Bold, to give his daughter Mary to the king's brother, the Duke of Guienne.

To protect himself from the league, Louis turned to the Pope for help. He also ordered that the bells of all the Paris churches should be rung at noon, that men might pray each day for peace. He even offered splendid terms to the Duke of Burgundy, if he would promise not to give his daughter to the Duke of Guienne.

During these months, while Louis did all he could to defeat his foes, his brother, who had never been strong, grew gradually worse, and in May 1472 he died.

The king had watched, with an eagerness he did not try to hide, for the news of his brother's death, knowing that it would spoil his enemies' plans.

When at length the tidings he wished arrived, he sent his soldiers into Guienne, and speedily dismissed the ambassadors from Burgundy.

Charles the Bold saw that his league with St. Pol and the Duke of Brittany was likely to be useless now that the king's brother was dead. In his rage he at once broke the truce of Amiens and crossed into France, burning towns and villages wherever he went.

At length, having been beaten by the king's troops, Charles marched into Normandy, hoping that the Duke of Brittany would join him.

But Louis invaded Brittany and kept the duke busy defending his own possessions, until at length he was glad to give up his alliance with Charles, and make peace with the king.

The Duke of Burgundy, finding that the lords who had joined the league were all either dead or beaten by Louis, hastened back to Burgundy with his army, and in November 1472 he again signed a truce with the King of France.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE DEATH OF CHARLES THE BOLD

As long as Charles the Bold lived he was the enemy of the French king. He soon broke the new truce he had made with Louis, and persuaded Edward IV. to come over from England to invade France.

Edward landed at Calais, expecting to be met by the duke with a large army. But no one was there to greet him, and when at length Charles arrived, it was with only a handful of men, for he had been too busy with new schemes to give much thought to his ally. Directing the English king to advance on the northern towns, which the constable St. Pol had treacherously promised to surrender, Charles set off in another direction, hoping to meet Edward beneath the walls of Paris.

But when Edward IV. reached the fortresses held by St. Pol, the constable had changed his mind, and refused to deliver them to the English king. Indeed, he received the enemy with the roar of cannon.

Edward, feeling that the Duke of Burgundy had deceived him, was ready to make terms with Louis. The French king at once offered to pay a large sum of money to Edward every year, if he would take his army back to England. Before the Duke of Burgundy had time to interfere, peace was signed between France and England for nine years.

Once again there was nothing for Charles to do but himself to make a truce with Louis. One of the conditions of the truce was that St. Pol, who had fled to the duke for

safety, should be given up to Louis. This Charles was willing enough to do, for the constable had proved a traitor to Burgundy as well as to France.

Although St. Pol was one of the richest and most powerful nobles in France, he was condemned to death as a traitor, and beheaded in Paris in 1475.

"That is a mighty hard sentence," said St. Pol when he heard his doom. "I pray God I may see Him to-day."

Having made a truce with Louis, Charles, still bent on conquests, marched into Switzerland with an army, and early in 1476 laid siege to a little town called Granson.

The town held out bravely, but at length, trusting to Charles's promise that he would spare the lives of the citizens, it surrendered. The duke, however, broke his word, and the brave inhabitants were all either drowned or hanged.

But the people of Switzerland were so angry at the treachery of Charles, that they rose against him, and drove him out of the country. The Burgundians, indeed, fled before the sturdy mountaineers in a panic, leaving the duke's treasures in the hands of the Swiss, who had no idea of their value.

Silver dishes the mountaineers sold for a few pence, as though they were tin; precious stones they flung carelessly aside. "There was nothing saved for the Burgundians but the bare life."

Charles the Bold determined to punish the Swiss, so he gathered together a new army, and marched against his enemies.

But the Swiss were now reënforced by German soldiers, and were prepared to defy the duke. A great battle was fought at Morat in June 1476, and once again the Swiss were victorious.

Beaten and disgraced, Charles could neither eat nor drink. Yet, with a handful of men, he marched to Nancy. He had taken the town of Nancy from René, Duke of

Lorraine, a year before, and had dreamed that it would be his capital when the war was over.

Duke René, however, had collected a large army, and was prepared to fight to the death with Charles, who was now in a desperate case.

The Duke of Burgundy had among his soldiers mercenaries who deserted him before ever they began to fight, and the wiser of Charles's counselors begged him to yield to René, or to withdraw from Nancy while there was yet time.

But the Duke of Burgundy would neither yield nor withdraw. In January 1477 he attacked the powerful army led by René. His men were utterly defeated, and Charles himself was killed, his body being found a few days after the battle frozen in a swamp and covered with wounds.

René ordered the body of his enemy to be carried into the town of Nancy, and he himself was present at the funeral service of the hapless duke. "Ah," he cried, with tears in his eyes, "may God be pleased to receive your soul. You have caused us many woes and sorrows."

When King Louis heard that his lifelong foe had been found dead in a frozen pond, he "was so much surprised with joy that scarcely could he contain his countenance."

His first act was to seize Burgundy and Artois, which now belonged to Mary, the daughter of Charles the Bold, who was twenty years of age.

To secure these and also the duke's Flemish provinces, Louis proposed that Mary should marry his son the dauphin. Mary, however, had a will of her own, and she chose to marry Maximilian, the son of the German emperor.

Louis was not the king to allow himself to be thus easily thwarted. He at once sent an army into Flanders, hoping to win Mary's provinces from their allegiance to the house of Burgundy.

The French king, however, had not only to reckon with Mary, but with her husband Maximilian. He led the

Flemings against the French army and defeated it. Content with his victory, and feeling that he was not strong enough to have Louis as an enemy, Maximilian then made a treaty with France, by which Louis gained possession of half of Charles the Bold's dominions.

About five years after her marriage, Mary of Burgundy was out riding when she was killed by a fall from her horse, leaving behind her two children, Philip and Margaret.

The children were too young to have any influence, and the burghers of Flanders refused to have anything to do with Maximilian. Instead they turned to the French king, begging him to make an alliance with them; and to make the alliance enduring, they proposed that the little Princess Margaret should marry the dauphin.

Louis was, of course, well pleased with a proposal that would join so many provinces to the French kingdom. Margaret was accordingly sent to France to be brought up as the dauphin's bride. The marriage, however, as you shall hear, never took place.

King Louis had now gained all that he had hoped for when he began to reign. Burgundy was apparently secured for France; Edward IV., whom Louis had always feared as a rival, was dead. The nobles, whose power the king had resented, had either lost their power or were dead. Louis XI. reigned supreme.

But although the king had won the things on which his heart was set, he found, as other than kings have also often found, that he was not satisfied. Every day he became a more unhappy man. There was no need for any one to envy the king, so lonely, so sad he was, in spite of his great dominions and power.

Louis was only sixty years of age, yet he was already bent and paralyzed like an old man. As he grew weaker his temper became more cruel, his distrust more quick.

So suspicious was he of every one, that although he was King of France, with beautiful palaces and grounds

that were all his own, he chose to shut himself up in a castle that was as gloomy as a prison. Around this castle was a broad ditch, in which by the king's orders iron spikes were placed. These spikes alone would have made it difficult to enter the king's abode. But the castle was still more securely guarded, for on the walls, day and night, were sentinels, who had orders to shoot any one who ventured within the castle grounds after nightfall. Even during the day no one might enter save by a little wicket gate, and then only with the king's leave.

In other days Louis, you remember, had been used to dress more shabbily than any of his courtiers. But now, in his gloomy castle, it seemed to give him pleasure to clothe himself in rich robes of crimson, lined with fur.

The king's only visitors were his daughter Anne and her husband, while a few courtiers and his favorites, Olivier the barber, Tristan the hangman, were always with him. Louis's doctor, too, lived at the castle. He was a cruel man, who, knowing the king's fear of death, would often pretend that his master was dying. Then the poor king would give him large sums of money that he might try the harder to save his life.

During these years Louis was indeed so fearful of death that the word was forbidden to be uttered in his presence. When his end grew near his servants were to say to the king, "Speak little, confess," and he would understand that death stood at the door.

But before death really came, Louis flung aside his fears and died, as a king, unafraid. In the quiet castle he had had time to think of all that his people had suffered at his hands. "They are in great desolation," he said to those who were with him. "If God had been pleased to grant me life, I should have made it all right; it was my thought and my desire."

But these kind thoughts came too late to be of any use to the people of France.

As he lay dying Louis asked for his son Charles, whom he had not seen for years, and whom he had left uneducated and neglected. As the prince stood by his bed, Louis gave him good advice, which, alas, was of little use, for the dauphin had not been trained to understand or follow his father's wishes.

On the last day of August 1483 Louis XI. died. His death, it is sad to tell, was "a great cause of joy throughout the kingdom, and had been impatiently waited for as a deliverance and as the ending of so many woes and fears."

All over the country, indeed, from the nobles in their castles to the peasants in their huts, a great sense of freedom and hope awoke, for Louis XI. was dead.

CHAPTER XLV

MADAME LA GRANDE

THE Dauphin Charles was only thirteen years old when his father, Louis XI., died, yet according to the law of the land he could have begun to reign at once. But the prince was delicate and ignorant, so for eight years his sister Anne ruled the kingdom of France for her young brother.

In 1483, when Anne began to govern France for the young king, Charles VIII., she was only twenty-two years of age. She was known as Madame la Grande, and soon showed that she was a wise and capable ruler as well as a true and noble lady.

The young king writhed under his sister's firm control, but he was unable to throw it aside. The nobles combined against her, but she went steadfastly on her way, reducing the taxes and giving offices of state to many of the great nobles, until they forgot their dislike to the government of Madame la Grande. She also set free many whom Louis had left in prison, and pleased every one by getting rid of the late king's favorites, among whom was the hated barber Olivier le Daim.

Anne had also an enemy in her sister's husband, Louis of Orleans. Being the next heir to the throne, he thought that he, rather than his cousin Anne, should be regent.

Annoyed by his boastful ways, and thinking, too, that Louis was more powerful than she liked, Madame la Grande tried to take him prisoner while he was staying in Paris. The duke, however, escaped, and joining Duke Francis of Brittany, began to invade France.

Anne, nowise dismayed, sent a large army against the invaders. In July 1488 a great battle was fought, in which the troops of the regent were victorious. The Duke of Orleans was captured and shut up in the tower of Bourges. To make him doubly secure the poor duke was locked up, at night, in a cage.

About a month later Francis of Brittany died, leaving his duchy to his two daughters. The younger daughter died soon after her father, and Anne, the elder, was then left alone with her great inheritance.

Madame la Grande at once made up her mind that Charles should wed Anne, and thus unite Brittany to France.

But the dauphin, you remember, already had a little bride waiting for him. Princess Margaret, daughter of Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy, had been sent to France while Louis XI. was alive, that when she was old enough she might marry Charles.

Madame la Grande, however, meaning to have her own way, sent Princess Margaret back to Burgundy. Then in 1491 she had the joy of seeing her brother married to Anne of Brittany, and the greater joy of knowing that Brittany would no longer be a thorn in the crown of the French king.

This was the last act of Madame la Grande as regent. Charles was now more than ever restive under his sister's control, so, wise as ever, Anne laid aside the power she had used so well, and left the king to rule alone.

The king, without Madame la Grande to restrain him, soon began to listen to those who urged him to go to war with Italy, to win back Naples, which the Spaniards had taken from the French.

Florence, too, distracted by the feuds among her princes, turned to Charles for help, saying that if he would defend the liberties of the city God would uphold him.

It was a rash undertaking. Anne warned Charles not to go; his counselors, for the most part, also foretold the danger of the expedition.

But the king had already found it pleasant to take his own way, and he made up his mind that he would go to Italy. "There was none save himself and two lesser folk who found it good," says an old writer.

In the summer of 1494 Charles set out with a gallant army for Italy.

Among all his troops there was no one who had been less educated than the king himself. His appearance, too, was against him, for he was "short and misshapen," while his face was so plain that the Italians were shocked at his ugliness.

Meanwhile the princes of Italy, quarreling among themselves, were all unprepared for war with a foreign foe.

When they reached Italy, therefore, Charles and his army simply rode through the cities, meeting with little or no resistance.

The Pope looked on and remarked with scorn that the French king came "not with arms to conquer so much as with chalk to mark up his lodgings" in the different towns at which he stopped.

But wherever Charles went he had the proud air of a conqueror. His troops, too, were allowed to pillage the towns and be insolent to the citizens, so that the Italians grew indignant.

Thus in every village and town through which he passed Charles, all unconsciously, left behind him enemies.

As the French king approached the town of Pisa he was hailed with joy, for the citizens were tired of being ruled by Florence, and Charles had promised to deliver them from the yoke they hated.

While Charles stayed at Pisa, a deputation headed by the great friar Savonarola, whose story you must some day read, came to the king and greeted him as God's messenger to Florence.

Charles did not understand Savonarola's words, although he promised that Florence should enjoy his goodwill.

But after the French king had entered the beautiful city, imagine the dismay of the inhabitants when he proposed to recall the Medici, the very family the Florentines had banished from the city as traitors. He even wished to tax the city for having banished the tyrants.

The magistrates of Florence, however, compelled Charles to give up his plan of restoring the Medici, and not only so, but they forced him to say that he would restore the towns which he had taken from them.

As the Florentines promised to pay the king a large sum of money if he agreed to their demands, Charles did not hesitate. Pisa, whose liberties he had promised to guard, he then faithlessly forsook and gave back to the Florentines.

On New Year's Eve, 1494, Charles at length reached Rome, entering the city at night, by torchlight. Here as elsewhere the king behaved as though he had conquered the city. But he was anxious to reach Naples, so he hastened on, to find that the King of Naples had fled on hearing of his approach, leaving the defense of his kingdom to his son Ferdinand II.

Ferdinand was the only prince who opposed Charles on this expedition. He was, however, defeated, and early in 1495 Naples hailed the French king, as so many Italian cities had already done, as a deliverer.

But Charles was yet to suffer for his foolish way of treating the Italians in the cities and villages through which he had passed. For the Italians now rose to fight under their princes against the king who had treated them as a conquered people, and whose troops had plundered their homes.

Blessed by the Pope and aided by Spain and the Emperor Maximilian, whose daughter Margaret Charles had refused to marry, the Italian princes joined together to cut off the French army if it attempted to retreat to its own country.

Charles was in grave peril, and as soon as he heard of

the force that was marching against him, he left Naples, and prepared to go home as quickly as possible.

Passing Rome, Charles reached Florence, to find the gates of the city shut against him by the great preacher Savonarola.

Onward still he marched, ordering all those soldiers who had been left to garrison the conquered towns again to join the army.

The Apennines were crossed in safety, but at Fornovo, in July 1495, Charles found the enemy who hoped to stay his homeward march.

But the French fought bravely and gained a great victory. It was at the battle of Fornovo that the famous knight Bayard, "sans peur et sans reproche," or, as we say, "without fear and without reproach," gained the notice of the king by his bravery.

In the thick of the fight two horses were killed beneath him, and although he was but twenty, he captured one of the enemy's banners, and presented it to Charles, who gave him five hundred crowns as a reward.

After the battle of Fornovo the Italian princes and their allies made peace with Charles, and he was able to hasten back to France, which he reached after the absence of little more than a year.

Naples had been left with only a small French garrison, so it was soon retaken by Ferdinand II. Thus the great expedition to Italy had accomplished nothing.

Charles, however, was not greatly troubled. He spent his days going from town to town holding merry jousts, tilting in tournaments, and the history of the times tells us that he "thought of nothing else."

But after a time Charles grew strangely different, and a year or two before his death he began to "visit his realm up and down, leading a good and holy life and doing justice, so much so that his subjects were content therewith."

One day in April 1498 the king went to watch a game

of tennis. As he passed through a low archway which led to the tennis-court, he struck his head against it, but seemed little hurt.

A few minutes later, however, he fell suddenly to the ground. Nine hours afterwards he died, being only twenty-eight years of age.

His people, touched by the kindness he had shown to them during the last two years of his life, mourned for him as for a friend.

Philip Comines, who was the great historian of his day, and whom Charles had had reason to treat with great severity, yet wrote of the king, "No man was ever so humane and gentle of speech. I think he never said a word to hurt any man's feelings."

CHAPTER XLVI

BAYARD IS TAKEN PRISONER

As the children of Charles VIII. had all died before their father, Louis, Duke of Orleans, was now heir to the throne of France. This was the same Louis whom Madame la Grande had shut up in the tower of Bourges.

Louis XII. was of too generous a nature to bear a grudge against his cousin. He was no sooner crowned, in 1498, than he invited her and her husband to court, receiving them on their arrival with royal graciousness.

The ministers of Charles VIII., and above all the officer who had taken the Duke of Orleans to prison in the tower of Bourges, expected to be dismissed, but Louis said, "It would but ill become the King of France to avenge the wrongs of the Duke of Orleans."

And Louis meant the words he said, for the ministers of Charles VIII. still kept their posts, which the officer became one of the most trusted servants of Louis XII.

The king loved his people and wished to rule them well. Guided by his chief minister, George of Amboise, the heavy taxes were reduced, and public money was used, not for the king's pleasure, but for the public good.

In these ways, and by the real care he showed for his subjects, Louis gained for himself the title "Father of his People." Tears streamed down his cheeks, tears of joy, when some years later, in 1506, a deputation from the city of Tours addressed him thus.

France prospered under the care of George of Amboise. Unfortunately, owing to the influence of Anne of Brittany,

whom Louis had married soon after the death of her husband, Charles VIII., the king went to war with Italy, as his predecessor had done. His Italian expeditions brought little fame either to Louis or his people.

To gain the town of Milan for France was Louis's great ambition. He therefore marched into Italy with an army, meaning to besiege the city.

Milan was ruled by its prince, Lodovico. When the French army appeared before the gates of the town, the nobles forsook their prince, and the citizens took up arms against him. Lodovico was forced to flee, while the gates of Milan were thrown open to Louis, who entered the city in triumph, without striking a single blow.

While the French king stayed in Milan, he ruled so wisely and so well, that there, as at home, he was loved by the people. When, however, Louis went back to France, the governor to whom he entrusted the city was so harsh in his treatment of the people that they revolted, drove out the French, and once again made Lodovico Prince of Milan.

But a few French soldiers, among whom was the knight Bayard, still held one castle. Leaving their fortress, they tried to slip quietly out of the city.

But the Milanese were watching, and as they sallied out, the French soldiers found themselves followed and attacked.

Bayard, the knight without fear and without reproach, at the head of a few men, turned and repulsed the citizens.

As they fled back towards the city, Bayard followed, far outstripping his companions, until he found himself alone in Milan in the midst of the enemy. He was taken prisoner and brought before Lodovico.

The knight looked so young that Lodovico, gazing at him in surprise, asked how it was that he was alone.

"By my faith, my lord," answered the knight, "I never imagined I was entirely all alone, and thought surely I was being followed by my comrades, who knew more about

war than I, for, if they had done as I did, they would like me be prisoners."

"By your faith," said Lodovico, "tell me how large is the army of the King of France."

"On my soul, my lord," answered Bayard, "so far as I can hear, there are fourteen or fifteen thousand men-at-arms, and sixteen or eighteen thousand foot; but they are all picked men, who are resolved to busy themselves so well this bout, that they will assure the state of Milan to the king our master. And meseems, my lord," continued the young knight fearlessly, "that you would surely be in as great safety in Germany as you are here, for your folks are not the sort to fight us."

Instead of being angry with Bayard for speaking so frankly, Lodovico, to the surprise of the courtiers, seemed pleased with the young chevalier. He bade his soldiers set the knight free, then bade Bayard ask for whatever he wished.

Bending his knee, the knight begged that he might be given back his horse and arms, and then be sent away to the French camp, which was about twenty miles away.

Prince Lodovico bade his servants bring Bayard his armor and his steed.

Then gayly the knight donned his armor and leaped upon his horse "without putting foot to stirrups." Asking next for a lance, which was at once handed to him, Bayard said to Lodovico, "My lord, I thank you for the courtesy you have done me; please God to pay it back to you."

Riding out into a large courtyard, Bayard then put spurs to his horse, "which gave four or five jumps, so gayly that it could not be better done; then the young knight gave him a little run, in the which he broke the lance against the ground into five or six pieces; whereat Lord Lodovico was not over pleased, and said out loud, 'If all the men-at-arms of France were like him yonder I should have a bad chance.' "

Nevertheless, Lodovico sent one of his trumpeters to show Bayard the way to the French camp.

Let me tell you now how Bayard, the knight without fear and without reproach, came to be in the French army.

From the time that he was only a little lad, Peter Bayard had longed to be a soldier. An uncle, who had influence at court, persuaded his parents to send their boy to be a page to a certain duke, by whom he was sent or "given" to Charles VIII. Then to his heart's delight he went to the wars with the king, and fought, you remember, at the battle of Fornovo.

When Charles VIII. died Bayard stayed at court in the service of Louis XII.

It was a sad day in the quiet castle of Bayard when its young master went out into the world, but the boy, "finding himself astride his well-bred roan, deemed that he was in Paradise."

His mother, poor lady, was in a tower of the castle, weeping at the thought of losing her son. Yet when she heard that he was on horseback, ready to go away, she dried her tears, and came to say farewell.

"Peter," she said, "as much as a mother can command her child, I do command you three things, which, if you do, rest assured they will enable you to pass through this present life with honor.

"The first is, that above all things you love and serve God, without offending Him in any way, if it be possible to you. Recommend yourself to Him every morning and evening, and He will give you aid.

"The second is, that you be mild and courteous to all gentlemen, casting away pride. . . . Be loyal in word and deed. Keep your promises. . . . Succor poor widows and orphans.

"The third is, that you be bountiful of the goods that God shall give you, to the poor and needy; for to give for His honor's sake never made any man poor."

Peter thanked his mother, answering her with these wise and gentle words: "With His favor into whose keeping you command me, I hope to follow your counsels, that you shall be fully satisfied."

Then his good mother took from her sleeve a little purse, containing six crowns in gold and one in small money, and gave it to her son, as well as a little trunk that held his linen.

And so, with a kiss upon his brow, his lady-mother went back to the castle to weep and pray for her noble boy.

Little wonder was it that with such a mother Bayard was soon known as the knight without fear and without reproach.

King Louis, you remember, had gone back to France after taking Milan. When he heard that it was again in the hands of Lodovico, he sent a large army to attack him, not at Milan, but at Novara, which town he had also taken from the French.

Both Lodovico and the French had hired Swiss soldiers to fight for them. When the day of battle came, these sturdy mountaineers refused to fight against one another. Those in Lodovico's army agreed to betray him to the French. Accordingly, they sallied out of the town as though they were going to fight, but instead of striking a blow they surrendered to the French army.

Lodovico, who was among them, disguised as an ordinary soldier, was captured and taken to France. Louis treated him with great severity, and finally sent him to prison, where he was kept for ten years, until indeed death set him free.

If Louis had now, in 1500, been content to fight no more in Italy, all might have been well. But he was still determined to possess Naples.

He therefore arranged with Ferdinand of Spain that together they should take possession of the kingdom of Naples, and divide it between them. But, as Ferdinand had until now been a friend of Frederick, King of Naples, his alliance with Louis was to be kept secret.

So it was the French king alone who attacked Frederick. He at once turned to Ferdinand of Spain, expecting the king to help him, as was his custom.

Apparently Ferdinand was as ready as ever to befriend Frederick. He sent his Spanish troops to Naples, and only when the kingdom was in their hands did Frederick find out that Ferdinand had sent his soldiers to help Louis and to ruin him.

King Frederick knew that it was useless to attempt to fight against two such great countries as France and Spain, so he gave himself up to Louis, who took him to France, where he died.

CHAPTER XLVII

BAYARD HOLDS THE BRIDGE ALONE

NAPLES was now in the hands of Louis and Ferdinand, and before long the two kings began to quarrel over the division of the kingdom. As Ferdinand had never meant to share it with Louis, war soon broke out between France and Spain.

A battle was fought on the banks of the river Garigliano, where the French were defeated, and, but for the bravery of Bayard, would have been utterly destroyed.

Here is the brave knight's story.

Hour after hour the Spanish troops had tried to cross a bridge over the river Garigliano, which was gallantly defended by the French. But all their efforts were in vain.

One of the Spanish captains then made up his mind, that if he could not take the bridge by force he would take it by a trick.

Ordering his men to withdraw from the river, he, with about a hundred horsemen, succeeded in crossing the Garigliano by a ford. Then, stealing into the French camp, the Spanish captain and his men raised a great shout.

The French heard the enemy in their camp, and, thinking that the Spaniards no longer meant to attempt to take the bridge, they forsook their post by the river, and rushed to the camp, thinking to save it from the Spaniards.

Only the good knight Bayard, with a soldier named La Basque, glanced across the bridge, and there in the distance was a body of about two hundred Spanish soldiers, riding gayly toward the river. It would be easy, they

thought, to take the bridge, now that the French had gone to defend their camp. Bayard saw what the Spanish soldiers meant to do, and, turning to La Basque, he said, "Go quickly and seek some of our men to guard the bridge, or we are all ruined. I will endeavor to hold the bridge until you come back, but make haste."

So La Basque, leaving Bayard alone, galloped off to bring the French soldiers back to the bridge.

Then the knight grasped his spear, and rode quickly to the end of the bridge, to which the Spaniards had already drawn near.

"Like a furious lion he charged the troop which was in the very act of crossing, so that three or four staggered, whereof two fell into the water and never rose more, the stream being large and deep. That done, much work was cut out for him, he being so fiercely assaulted, that without exceeding good horsemanship he could not have resisted.

"But, like a chafed tiger, he threw himself against the rail of the bridge, that the enemy might not get behind him, and defended himself so well with the sword, that the Spaniards were confounded and thought that he must be a fiend, not a man."

In this way Bayard by himself actually held the bridge until La Basque returned with a troop of soldiers, who forced the enemy from the bridge, and chased them for more than a mile.

From this chase Bayard, as you will easily believe, was the last to turn back. He was weary now and rode but slowly, whereupon twenty or thirty Spanish soldiers, seeing his condition, hastened back and surrounded the knight, crying, "Surrender! surrender!" There being nothing else to do, Bayard surrendered.

The French soldiers, riding quickly back to the bridge, did not at first notice that Bayard had been left behind. No sooner, however, did they miss him than, without a moment's delay, they turned, and set out in pursuit of the

enemy, who were carrying off their good knight, "the flower and perfection of all gentility."

Soon, so fiercely did they ride, they overtook the Spaniards. Shouting, "France, France! Turn, Spaniards, turn! you shall not thus carry off the flower of knighthood," they fell upon the Spanish troop and threw many of them to the ground.

Bayard was still fully armed and needed only a steed, his own being exhausted. Seeing La Basque had dismounted, the knight was quickly astride his horse, saying, "France, France! Bayard, Bayard, whom you have let go!"

Now the Spanish soldiers who had captured Bayard had not known that their prisoner was the noble knight without fear and without reproach. His name struck terror to their hearts, and those who were still mounted put spurs to their horses and galloped off.

"The French," says the servitor who wrote the good knight's life, "returned in high glee to their camp, where for a full week they never ceased talking of their fine adventure, in particular of the prowess of the good knight."

So far King Louis had gained little from his Italian wars. In 1508, however, France, Austria and Spain, the three great powers of Europe, formed a league called the League of Cambrai. The object of the league was to crush the Venetians and plunder their rich city. Venice was so rich and proud that she was called the "Queen of the Adriatic," the Adriatic being the sea on which she stands.

The Pope, too, was on the side of the league, and to help it to do its cruel work he pronounced an interdict against the republic of Venice and her inhabitants.

Louis was the first of the great powers to invade Venice. In fifteen days he had done all he had hoped to do, having in May 1509 defeated the Venetians with terrible slaughter, near a village called Agnadello. After this victory many towns opened their gates to the French, and the proud Venetians were left with little save Venice itself.

Spain soon followed France, and took her share of the spoil, while Austria and the Pope claimed some important cities which they had long coveted.

Louis now went back to France, leaving troops to hold the towns he had won. The following year his great minister, George of Amboise, died, and Louis missed his wise guidance in the days to come.

Meanwhile, the League of Cambrai came to an end. The Pope, having won from Venice the towns he wished, was pleased again to become her friend, and removed the interdict which had helped to ruin her. He then joined the Swiss, Ferdinand of Spain, Venice, and Henry VIII. of England, in the Holy League, the object of which was to turn the French out of Italy.

Undaunted by the great powers now arrayed against him, King Louis at once sent his nephew Gaston de Foix, whom he dearly loved, to take command of the French troops in Milan.

Led by this gallant prince, the French troops defeated the soldiers of the Holy League again and again, and at last won the great battle of Ravenna, on Easter Sunday 1512.

At the moment of victory, however, Gaston de Foix, seeing two companies of Spanish soldiers marching off the battlefield in good order, could not resist falling upon them, with a mere handful of men, and he and his followers were slain.

His soldiers loved their brave young captain, and when they found that Gaston was dead they sobbed aloud, caring little now for their success.

Louis, when he heard of his nephew's death, cried, "I would fain have no longer an inch of land in Italy, and be able at that price to bring back to life my nephew Gaston, and all the gallants who perished with him. God keep us from often gaining such victories."

After the death of Gaston de Foix the French were

defeated again and again, until at length the Holy League had accomplished its object and driven them out of Italy.

The Italian wars were for the time ended, but Louis was now threatened with danger nearer home; for in 1513 Henry VIII. of England invaded France, landing at Calais with twenty thousand men.

Louis gathered an army together, but in autumn he was surprised by the English near Guinegate. The French fled almost without striking a blow, and because they used their spurs more than their swords, this battle was named the "Day of Spurs." Among the prisoners was the valiant Bayard.

In the following year Louis's wife, Queen Anne, died, and the king, weary of war, made peace with Henry VIII.

But before the English king would sign a treaty of peace, he made Louis promise to marry his sister, Mary Tudor, a young and beautiful princess.

King Louis was now fifty-two years old, and for years he had lived a simple life, eating plain food, and, when it was possible, going early to bed. But after he married the English princess, to please his young bride he began to live more gayly, to sit up late, to go to dances, banquets, tournaments.

His doctors warned the king that he was not strong enough to enjoy such gayeties, but he would not listen. Before he had been married to Mary three months he took ill, and died on New Year's Day 1515.

That was a cold and dreary New Year's Day in France. The ringers wandered through the streets of Paris, ringing their bells and crying slow and sad, "The good King Louis, Father of his People, is dead." And as they listened to the words of the bell-ringers, the people wept.

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD

As Louis XII. left no son to succeed him, his cousin Francis, Count of Angoulême, who had married his daughter Claude, now being king.

Francis I. was twenty years old when Louis XII. died. He was tall and handsome, "a comely prince as ever lived," yet he was at the same time only a spoilt child.

Louis had loved his brave and brilliant cousin, but he had been afraid that Francis's extravagant, pleasure-loving ways would not be good for the people of France, for whose welfare he, Louis, had so greatly cared.

"This big boy will spoil everything for us," he had sometimes sadly said, as he watched his cousin going his own willful way.

His mother adored Francis, but she had not trained him to love the country he was now to govern, nor had she taught him to be kind and unselfish to those who served him.

Francis I. began his reign by giving magnificent balls and holding tournaments, in which he himself was the most important person, for he did not only look on, but performed many skillful feats at the jousts.

On these festivities the king spent so much money, that in a short time the treasury was nearly empty, and, as Louis XII. had feared, it became necessary to increase the taxes.

But Francis I. was not long content with the fame he could gain at balls and tournaments. He longed for the

greater glory and excitement of the battlefield, and soon he determined to try to regain what Louis XII. had lost in Italy. When his enemies heard of his ambition, they at once renewed the Holy Alliance.

It was during this Italian expedition that the king was knighted by Bayard on the field of Marignano, as you shall hear.

Appointing his mother, Louise of Savoy, regent in his absence, Francis I. set out for Italy in July 1515 with a large army.

To cross the Alps at a spot which was unguarded by the Swiss, who were fighting for the Duke of Milan, rocks had to be pierced or blown up, bridges thrown across deep ravines. By the king's orders, and by his presence encouraging the men in their difficult task, every obstacle was at length overcome, and the French army descended into the plains of Lombardy.

At Marignano, about ten miles from Milan, the French met the Italian soldiers with their Swiss mercenaries.

Francis was quietly sitting down to supper in the camp, when he was warned that the Swiss troops were near, and he at once went out to meet the enemy.

The Swiss, with long pikes, fought with the greatest courage. Again and again the French charged them, but after each repulse the Swiss advanced, determined as before.

Bayard was, as ever, in the forefront of the battle. Throwing himself furiously upon the Swiss, he cried, "Swiss! traitors! villains! get you back to eat cheese in your mountains if you can."

The king, too, did not spare himself. Ever in the forefront of the battle, he fought so courageously that "the top of his helmet was pierced, so as to let in daylight, by the thrust of a pike."

Night fell and the armies withdrew, but there was little rest either for the soldiers or their leaders.

Francis remained most of the night on horseback with

his men; snatching a little sleep, however, by lying down on a gun-carriage, a harder bed than that on which kings are used to take their rest.

As soon as day dawned, the battle began anew. The king fought bravely and his men stood firm, but the Swiss still hoped for victory until about ten o'clock, when the Venetian troops hastened to the help of the French.

Then the sturdy Swiss knew that they were beaten, for they were already exhausted by the struggle of the day before, as well as by the heat and want of food. So, steadily and in good order, they marched away, leaving Francis victorious on the field of Marignano.

Those who had fought most bravely the king created knights at once, before they left the battlefield. First, however, he wished himself to be knighted by Bayard.

"Sire," said the knight when Francis told him his wish, "sire, the king of so noble a realm, he who has been crowned, consecrated, anointed with oil sent down from heaven, is knight over all other knights."

"Bayard, my friend," said the king, "make haste; do my bidding."

"Assuredly, sire," answered the knight, "I will do it, since it is your pleasure."

Then taking his sword Bayard said, "Please God, sire, that in war you may never take to flight." After which, holding up his sword in the air, he cried, "Assuredly, my good sword, thou shalt be well guarded as a relic, and honored above all others for having this day conferred upon so handsome and puissant a king the order of chivalry, and never will I wear thee more, if it be not against Turks, Moors, Saracens." Whereupon he gave two bounds and thrust his sword into the sheath.

The next day Francis I. entered Milan in triumph, while the Swiss, "ragged, gaunt, wounded, with flags torn and funeral dirges for festal songs," marched wearily back to their mountains.

Soon after the battle of Marignano, in November 1515, Francis arranged a Perpetual Peace with the Swiss and the Pope. He then went back to France, where the people, overjoyed at their young king's victory, gave him a right loyal welcome.

In 1519 the Emperor Maximilian died, and this was a matter of great importance to France.

Charles of Austria, who was already King of Spain, being Maximilian's grandson, should naturally have become emperor. Neither the French nor the English king, Henry VIII., however, wished Charles to become more powerful than he was already.

Indeed, Francis I. determined that he himself would become emperor. With this purpose in his mind he did not scruple to bribe all those who had anything to do with electing a new emperor.

"We are wholly determined to spare nothing, and to stake all for all upon it, as the matter we most desire and have most at heart in this world," said the king, speaking of the choice of an emperor.

But in spite of all that Francis could do, Charles of Spain was chosen emperor, and thus became the most powerful monarch in Europe.

Francis was bitterly disappointed, and henceforth he hated Charles.

Henry VIII., who had also wished to be chosen emperor, was quite ready to join Francis in the war which he intended to carry on against his successful rival. He therefore gladly agreed when Francis suggested that they should meet together to talk over their plans.

The French king delighted in splendor as much as did Henry's great minister, Cardinal Wolsey. French and English indeed vied with each other in their preparations for the meeting of the two kings.

When all was ready, so brilliant was the scene, that the plain near to the little town of Guines, where the two

kings met, was ever after called the "Field of the Cloth of Gold."

Henry VIII. sent hundreds of skillful workmen from Flanders and Holland to build him a palace at the meeting-place.

It was only a palace of wood, yet, when it was gilded with gold, it shone bright in the sunshine, gorgeous as any palace reared in fairyland.

Great gates of gold opened into the palace grounds, in which was a wonderful fountain that also shone as gold; while from the mouth poured, not water as you would expect, but wine that sparkled crimson in the rays of the sun. And from this wonderful fountain all who wished might drink, for on its margin were inscribed in letters of gold the welcome words, "Make good cheer who will."

Without the palace shone as gold, within it was hung with tapestries of gold and rich embroideries. Wherever one turned, one's eyes were dazzled with gleam of gold and precious stones.

Francis did not wish to be surpassed in splendor by the English king, so he ordered an enormous tent to be erected. The roof was covered with cloth of gold, while inside the dome was lined with rich blue velvet. Here and there amid the blue shone golden stars, until almost it seemed that one was gazing into the starry heavens themselves.

Ropes of gold and silver fastened the tent securely, or so it seemed, to the ground. But before the kings met a violent storm of wind arose, and to the dismay of Francis and his lords the gold and silver cords were twisted and broken as though they were but threads. The golden pole which supported the tent was snapped in two, and the beautiful blue velvet dome with its spangling stars was blown to the ground.

Francis did not attempt to put up his tent again. During the storm he went for shelter to an old castle close at hand,

where he stayed during the meetings on the "Field of the Cloth of Gold."

In June 1520 Henry VIII., with a grand retinue, sailed from England, and soon after Francis and he met near the golden palace which the English king had built.

Both kings were on powerful horses, richly adorned with trappings of gold and silver, Francis and Henry being dressed, as was but suitable, in garments of gold and silver cloth.

Without dismounting the two kings embraced one another, and then, leaping from their horses, they walked, arm-in-arm, into the golden palace.

"I am come a long way, and not without trouble, to see you," said Francis courteously to the English king, "and I am ready to help you as much as is in my power."

"Never saw I a prince," answered Henry, "whom I could love better than you, nor for whose sake I would have crossed the seas."

For three weeks dances and tournaments were held every day, and in the tournaments the kings themselves took part and fought with the knights.

One day Henry laughingly laid his hand on Francis's collar, and said, "Brother, I should like to wrestle with you."

Francis, nothing loath, at once agreed, for although he did not look as strong as Henry, he was a "mighty good wrestler," and soon the English king was lying on the ground. He sprang up, wishing to try his strength again; but his nobles, afraid lest jest should turn to earnest, persuaded Henry that it was time to go in to supper.

The French king was, as you know, young, and sometimes he grew tired of the ceremony that always surrounded him. So one morning he made up his mind to do what he liked, and without telling any one he got up early and rode off to visit King Henry in his golden palace, taking with him only two gentlemen and a little page.

When he reached the palace and asked for the king, he was told that he was not yet awake.

"It does not matter," said Francis gayly, and to the amazement of the English lords he went at once to Henry's bedroom, knocked at the door, and walked in.

Henry, sleepy as he was, was pleased that the King of France had come to visit him alone. He jumped out of bed, took from his neck a collar of gold, and begged Francis to wear it for his sake.

Francis was pleased with Henry's gift, and promised to wear it; while he gave Henry a bracelet which the English king said he would wear every day.

It was too merry a visit to end quickly. Francis stayed while Henry dressed, and refusing to let him call for his servants, he helped him, warming his shirt, and making himself so useful that Henry's toilet was soon over.

Then, well pleased with himself and his morning escapade, Francis rode off to his old castle.

On his way home the king met his nobles, who, alarmed by his absence, had come to look for him.

They welcomed Francis gladly, and then, after hearing where he had been, one of the nobles begged to know who had advised him to go without an escort.

"Not a soul counseled me," answered the king, laughing, "and well I know that not one in my kingdom would have done so."

But Henry VIII. was not really so friendly to Francis as he seemed. Before he went back to England he met the Emperor Charles; and when war broke out Henry VIII. did not, after all, help Francis, but fought on the side of the emperor against the French king. So that in reality all the expense and all the splendor of the "Field of the Cloth of Gold" had been of little use.

CHAPTER XLIX

THE DEATH OF BAYARD

THE constable of France at this time was Charles, Duke of Bourbon, one of the proudest and wealthiest of the French nobles. He had been at the "Field of the Cloth of Gold" with Francis; and Henry, seeing his greatness and his riches, had said in his rough way, that if he had such a subject in England, he would not long leave his head on his shoulders.

Louise of Savoy, the king's mother, who had no love for the constable, quarreled with him, and then persuaded Francis to take from him all his wealth and estates.

Bourbon was indignant with the king for treating him so harshly, and left his service, offering to fight for the Emperor Charles. The emperor was too wise to refuse Bourbon's offer, and soon the constable found himself commander of part of Charles's troops in Italy, and forced to fight against his king and his country. For Francis had again sent an army to Italy to lay siege to Milan.

The siege was not successful, Bourbon forcing the French to raise it, and so harassing the army that it broke its ranks and seemed as though it would flee in utter confusion.

Bayard, although not commander of the French, rallied the troops, and charged the emperor's troops. The brave knight, however, was wounded, his reins falling from his hands as he cried, "Jesus, my Lord, I am dead."

Then lifting the sword to his lips, he kissed the handle as though it were a cross, saying as he did so, "Have pity on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy."

One of his servants helped the wounded knight to dis-

mount, and placed him under a tree, his face to the enemy. Then weeping bitterly, for he saw that his master was nigh to death, the servant refused to leave his side.

As Bayard lay beneath the tree, Bourbon rode past in hot pursuit of the French. But seeing the good knight, he drew up, and dismounting came near to him and said, "Bayard, my friend, I am sore distressed at your mishap; there is nothing for it but patience. Give not way to melancholy. I will send in search of the best surgeons in the country, and by God's help you will soon be healed."

"My lord," answered the knight without fear and without reproach, "there is no pity for me. I die, having done my duty; but I have pity for you to see you serving against your king, your country, and your oath."

Then Bourbon, silent and ashamed, turned and left the brave knight alone with his faithful servant. A few hours later Bayard died, a captive in the enemy's camp. And bitterly was he missed by all who loved him.

A loyal servant, or servitor as he was called, in after days wrote the life of the good knight Bayard, and he tells us that "among all sorts of men Bayard was the most gracious person imaginable. Of worldly pelf he took no thought at all, as he clearly proved, being at his death little richer than he was at his birth-hour. It was his creed that riches ennoble not the heart." Soon after Bayard's death the king's army returned to France.

Bourbon, you remember, was silent and ashamed when Bayard reproached him for his disloyalty, but he did not alter his conduct. In 1525, one year after Bayard's death, Bourbon actually led the army of the emperor into France and besieged Marseilles, boasting that he would soon dethrone Francis.

But so angry were the French with the constable for daring to lead a foreign foe into France, that they fought with unconquerable determination, until the siege was given up. Bourbon was pursued for a long way by his

angry fellow-countrymen, and he found it wise to retreat as quickly as he was able toward Italy.

Francis was so pleased that the enemy had been forced to retreat, that, against the advice of his counselors, he resolved himself to carry the war into Italy and besiege the town of Pavia.

Thinking that he could easily hold the town, Francis, again refusing to listen to his advisers, sent a body of his soldiers away from Pavia to seize Naples.

But soon the French king found that he had been foolish to weaken his forces. For Pescara, leader of the emperor's forces, as well as Bourbon, with a large band of German mercenaries, were advancing upon the town.

Francis might still have raised the siege and withdrawn to a place of safety, but again he refused to listen to his older counselors, while his favorites swayed him as they pleased.

"A French king does not change his plans for his enemies," they said to him more than once, and Francis was soon ready to echo their words. Believing them, he would not raise the siege of Pavia, but waited beneath her walls for Pescara and the constable.

It was February 1525 when the emperor's troops reached the French camp, and even got inside the entrenchments.

They were fiercely attacked by the French artillery, and, being exposed on every side, the cannonade was so deadly that "you could see nothing but heads and arms flying in the air."

To escape from this terrific fire, the emperor's troops turned to find shelter; but Francis, thinking that they had taken to flight, at once left his entrenchments to follow them.

Unfortunately the king and those who were with him now placed themselves between the enemy and their own soldiers, who were no longer able to let their cannon play on the foe, lest they should strike their king.

Pescara, seeing what had happened, led his troops on,

and soon he had completely cut Francis off from his camp and the main body of his army.

The French king, hemmed in by the Spanish, fought bravely. Even when he was wounded in his face, arms, legs, he still fought on.

Erelong his horse fell, mortally wounded, dragging his rider with him to the ground. In a moment, however, Francis was on his feet, fighting as fiercely as before.

The Spanish soldiers crowded round this knight who was so tall, so strong, so brave. They did not know it was the king, yet they knew that to capture this gallant prince would be to win a prize. Golden buttons studded his coat of mail, which also bore upon it the royal lilies of France, while long thick plumes waved upon his helmet. It seemed that the soldiers did not notice the royal lilies. As the soldiers pressed ever more closely upon him, a friend of Bourbon rode along, and, seeing the king, defenseless now amid the rough soldiers, he drove them away, begging Francis to surrender to the constable, who was not far away.

"No, by my faith," answered the king, "rather would I die than surrender to a traitor." And as Francis spoke those words he was every inch a king.

At this moment a Spanish officer arrived, and kneeling before Francis received from him his sword.

The battle of Pavia was over, the French king being a prisoner in the hands of the emperor, while half the nobles of France lay slain upon the battlefield. Francis wrote sadly to his mother to tell her of the great disaster. "There is nothing in the world left to me," he told her, "but honor and my life, which is safe."

Charles meanwhile ordered his royal prisoner to be taken to Spain, where he was shut up in a gloomy tower in Madrid. Poor pleasure-loving Francis!

The loneliness and dullness of the days soon made the king long to make terms with the emperor, which at

first he had declared he would never do, not if he remained a prisoner all his life.

So in 1526, that he might gain his freedom, Francis signed the Treaty of Madrid, and agreed to send his two little sons as hostages to Spain. The king was then free to return to France. When he reached French soil he sprang gayly upon a fine Arab horse that awaited him, and galloped off to his mother and sister, who were ready to welcome him. As he rode away he cried to his courtiers, "So now I am once more a king." But that Francis might be free his two little sons were banished from their home.

CHAPTER L

THE REFORMERS

Francis I. soon made it plain that he did not mean to keep the Treaty of Madrid, which he had signed only that he might escape from his gloomy Spanish prison. The Emperor Charles was angry when he found that he had been duped by the French king, and soon war again broke out between France and Spain.

During this war, in 1527, the Duke of Bourbon with his German mercenaries dared to assail the walls of Rome. "Clad all in white," that he might the better be seen by his men, the duke was shot as he was scaling the walls of the city. As he fell he bade one of his captains cover him with a cloak, and carry him away, that his men might not know of his death until the city was taken.

By August 1529 Charles and Francis had both grown weary of war, and once again a treaty was signed, called the Treaty of Cambrai, or the "Ladies' Peace," because it was chiefly arranged by two royal ladies, Margaret of Austria and Louise of Savoy.

Three years later Louise of Savoy died, leaving great wealth to her son, the king.

Then Francis, thinking that now he had money enough to pay an army, again began to invade Charles's domains. The emperor, however, not only drove the French back to their own country, but himself marched with his troops into the south of France.

A French general, named Montmorency, was sent to repulse the invaders. But though he had a splendid

army, he would neither fight nor garrison the important towns.

Instead, he sent his soldiers to wander through the beautiful country of Provence, with orders to destroy everything that would otherwise give shelter or food to the enemy.

Farms were burned, olive-yards and vineyards trampled down and destroyed. Bakehouses and mills were pulled to pieces, and wheat and hay consumed by fire. Wells were, if not poisoned, made useless for drinking; wine-casks were pierced, so that there might be no wine to refresh the weary army. In a short time no more desolate land than Provence was to be seen.

For two months Charles v., refusing to be baffled, struggled on through the desolate country with his starving army. But at length, hearing that Francis himself, with a large army, was marching against him, he gave up all hope of conquering Provence, and retreated into Italy. The emperor had fought no battle, but he had brought misery and starvation to many a fair home in the south of France.

The king's two sons had by this time left Spain and returned home. Shortly before Francis marched against Charles, Francis the Dauphin died. This was a great grief to the king.

The king's second son, Henry, a moody, passionate prince, now became heir to the throne. He allied himself with Montmorency, who had been made constable after the emperor had been forced to leave Provence. The constable was a strict Catholic, and a powerful and ambitious noble.

Meanwhile, in June 1538, a truce for ten years was made between Francis and Charles. It only lasted for four years, for the French king still wished to punish Charles for becoming emperor. So for six years, battles of which I need not tell you were fought between

the rival monarchs. But at last, in 1544, a treaty was signed at Crespy, by which Francis gave up his claim to any possessions in Italy, while he also promised to join the emperor in upholding the Roman Catholic Church and putting down the Reformers.

The Reformers, who were also called Protestants, were sorry when they saw the greedy and wicked lives of many of the monks in the Romish Church, and they wished to reform the Church so that only those who lived pure and holy lives might be her servants.

A great movement, called the Reformation, was begun by the Reformers, and soon spread all over France and Germany. Indeed, before long, the new sect was to be found in every town and village in Europe.

The Pope was very angry that any one should think that the Church, of which he was the head, should need to be reformed, and he encouraged Charles and Francis to punish the Reformers.

In Germany the great Martin Luther fought against the evils of the Church. In France John Calvin used his power on the same side.

Francis I. kept the promise he had made at Crespy by beginning to persecute the peasants of Vaudois. The Vaudians or Waldensians were quiet, hardworking, honest folk, who lived in certain valleys among the Alps. They were no longer Catholic, but worshiped God in their own simple way, and were known as Reformers or Protestants.

One spring morning in 1545 Francis sent his soldiers into the silent valleys, where the peasants lived their simple lives, with orders to slay the Waldensians and destroy their homes.

Three thousand people were put to death, and many more were sent to the galleys, while hundreds of children were sold as slaves.

Lest any Reformer had escaped, Francis's captain, before he marched home, forbade "any one on pain of death

to give any asylum, aid or succor, or furnish money or victuals, to any Vaudian or heretic." There is no deeper stain on the name of Francis I. than this cruel persecution of the peasants of Vaudois. The Reformers had cause to fear the king; but when the dauphin married the Pope's niece, Catherine de Medici, they knew that even when Francis I. no longer reigned they would still have reason to fear their new sovereign.

During the last years of the king's life the kingdom was largely ruled by the dauphin, along with the Montmorencies and the Guises, the two most powerful families in France.

Early in 1547 the king grew seriously ill. As he lay dying, Diana of Poitiers, the dauphin's great favorite, and the Duke of Guise, mocked at their king, saying, "He is going at last, the fine fellow." Thus, with none to comfort him, Francis 1. died. At his father's funeral the dauphin could scarcely conceal his happiness that now, at length, he would really begin to reign.

In spite of all his wars Francis I. had found time, after the Treaty of Cambrai in 1529, to show his interest in the new love of books, of painting, and of sculpture, that had arisen in his reign.

This new love of literature, painting, and other arts, was called the Renaissance. The king, in his desire to encourage a revival of learning, had invited to his court poets, artists, musicians, sculptors, to show the interest he felt in their pursuits, and the honor in which he held them. A great Italian painter named Leonardo da Vinci, as well as an Italian sculptor called Benvenuto Cellini, not only visited but lived at the king's court. Francis had also shown his love of architecture by building many beautiful palaces, among which the best known is perhaps Fontainebleau.

CHAPTER LI

THE "GABELLE" OR SALT TAX

HENRY II., who now in 1547 became king, had none of his father's gracious ways. He was ruled by his favorite, Diana of Poitiers, for whose sake he paid little attention to his young wife, Catherine de Medici.

But Diana was not all-powerful. The king was also greatly influenced by the Constable Montmorency and the Duke of Guise, and he gave to them and their families all the most important positions in the kingdom.

To show you how little Henry II. tried to win his people's heart, and how ungracious he was compared to his father, Francis I., I will tell you of the trouble that befell the province of Guienne.

Francis I., when he died, had left the hated *Gabelle,* or salt tax, in force. Yet about five years before his death, when an insurrection broke out in Rochelle over the *Gabelle,* Francis had treated the rebels with royal graciousness.

The Rochellese had refused to pay the tax, and driven away the tax-collectors.

On hearing this Francis I. had himself gone with troops to Rochelle.

The people being warned that the king was coming determined to submit, and assembled in the Town Hall to await him.

No sooner had Francis entered and sat down than the magistrates of the town, falling on their knees before the king, besought him to pardon the people, for they had repented, and would never again refuse to pay their taxes.

Then Francis stood up and said, "Speak no more of the revolt. I desire neither to destroy your persons, nor to seize your goods. I long more for the hearts of my subjects than for their lives and their riches. I will never at any time of my life think again of your offense, and I pardon you without excepting a single thing. I desire that the keys of your city and your arms be given back to you."

The people's hearts were won by the king's kindness, and the fine, which was the only punishment imposed on them, was paid with right goodwill.

But now, a year after Henry II. had become king, the people of Guienne revolted against this same salt tax. Furious with the collector of the *Gabelle,* they killed him. Two of his officers also they beat to death, throwing their bodies into the river Charente, crying the while, "Go, wicked Gabellers, salt the fish of the Charente."

When Henry II. heard what the peasants had done, he was very angry. The Constable Montmorency was sent to punish the rebels, and marched toward Bordeaux, the chief city of the revolt.

Hearing of the constable's approach, and knowing it was useless to resist, the poor people determined that they would do all they could to appease his wrath.

They therefore sent their chief citizens to meet him with the keys of the city, and begged him to come to Bordeaux in a boat, which they had fitted up for him with every comfort and luxury.

Montmorency was not the man to have pity. "Away, away with your boat and your keys," he cried. "I have other keys here with which I mean to enter your city," and he grimly pointed to his guns.

Then, making a breach in the walls, the constable and his army entered the city. More than a hundred persons were put to death, and many others were publicly whipped. Heavy fines were laid upon the citizens, and to complete

their disgrace the bells were taken from the belfries, the clocks from the towers.

The miserable people fell on their knees in the street, and begged the constable to have pity on them. Only then did Montmorency, satisfied that he had done the king's will, withdraw his troops.

In 1552 Henry, through the influence of the Guises, declared war on Charles v., who was now more powerful than ever. Many of the German princes were jealous of the emperor's power, and eager to make a league with Henry II. against Charles.

So, confident of success, the French king marched into Germany, where three cities at once opened their gates to their new ally.

One of these cities, Metz, Charles v. determined to besiege, and if possible to retake.

For two months the emperor's cannon battered on the walls of Metz; he even made several efforts to take the city by assault. But all his attempts were vain, so gallantly was the city defended by the constable and the Duke of Guise.

Winter came, and the emperor's army suffered from cold and famine. The day after Christmas 1552, Charles in despair decided to raise the siege.

It was seldom that he had been baffled, and as his army marched away from Metz in the middle of the night, Charles, who was an old man, said, "I see very well that Fortune resembles women; she prefers a young king to an old emperor."

Old age, and perhaps fear of further defeat, made Charles now resolve to resign his great possessions to his son, Philip II. of Spain, while he himself went into a monastery for the rest of his life.

Philip II. continued the war with France after his father had retired, and in this he was helped by his wife, Mary Tudor, Queen of England, who sent both money and men to his aid.

CHAPTER LII

THE SIEGE OF ST. QUENTIN

THE first important event in the war with Spain was the siege of St. Quentin.

St. Quentin stood on a height, protected on one side by a great stretch of morass, through which flowed a branch of the river Somme.

Admiral Coligny, a nephew of the constable, undertook to hold St. Quentin against the enemy, but it was plain that this would be no easy matter. The marsh, which lay to the east, was the best defense the town had, for its walls were old and broken down. Two holes had even been discovered in these crumbling walls, and had been filled up only with twigs and bales of wool.

It was important to hold the town, for, should St. Quentin fall, the enemy would have little difficulty in marching on Paris itself. The constable, therefore, hearing from Admiral Coligny that the town could hold out only for a few days longer without relief, hastened toward it, hoping to raise the siege, or, if that was not possible, at least to send provisions to the starving garrison.

D'Andelot, Coligny's youngest brother, was accordingly ordered to cross the Somme, wade through the marsh, and try to reach St. Quentin with men and provisions. The marsh was the only possible way by which to reach the town, the others being closely guarded by the enemy.

Montmorency, with the main body of his army, began to move his soldiers across the morass in order to support D'Andelot in his attempt to enter the town. But many

of the men lost the narrow footpaths, which were covered with water, and floundered in the marsh, while the boats promised by Coligny to carry them across the Somme did not appear for two hours after the time they were expected.

When the boats did arrive, the eager soldiers crowded into them so that in the middle of the stream they were in danger of being swamped. Seeing the danger, some of the men jumped out to lighten the boats, and many were drowned; while others who reached the opposite shore could not land, so steep and treacherous was the bank.

In the end d'Andelot and about five hundred men succeeded in entering the town with a small quantity of provisions.

The constable now saw that he must withdraw from his dangerous position. He remembered a narrow pass through which he hoped to lead his army to safety. He sent forward a body of cavalry to secure the passage, only to find that he was too late; it was already held by the enemy. The French army was in a trap, and the Spanish soldiers knew it.

Fiercely they swooped down upon the constable and his army, and soon half the French soldiers lay slain upon the ground.

Montmorency was wounded and taken prisoner, as were many of his officers; although the Prince of Condé, brother of the King of Navarre, escaped as by a miracle. French flags were strewn on the ground and captured by the enemy, as well as nearly all the French guns. The defeat of the French army was complete.

This great victory was won by the Spanish in August 1557. Philip's officers begged him to advance at once on Paris, but the King of Spain hesitated, and missed his opportunity.

St. Quentin was still untaken, and Philip determined to stay and continue the siege. Admiral Coligny, knowing well that every day he held out gave his nation a day longer to recover from the heavy blow that had been dealt her,

did not dream of surrendering, though the townsfolk were in a pitiful state of starvation and weakness.

For seventeen days the admiral inspired the citizens to repulse every attack made by the Spaniards. At the end of that time the tottering walls gave way, and the enemy rushed into the town.

Coligny met them almost single-handed, and fought with desperate courage, but he was overcome and taken prisoner. D'Andelot also resisted to the last.

A terrible scene followed. The Spanish troops spread over the town, killing and torturing all whom they met, until women and little children fled in terror, to hide themselves in cellars or garrets—anywhere to escape from the Spanish soldiers.

The Duke of Guise, who had been sent to Italy to help the Pope against the Spanish, was speedily recalled after St. Quentin had fallen. The Pope thought that the French had been of little use, and bluntly said so, when he heard that Henry wished the commander to return to France. "Go, then," he told the duke, "having done little for your king, less for the Church, and nothing for your own honor."

In France, Guise was welcomed with joy. Nobles and men-at-arms flocked to his standard, as brave as before the defeat of St Quentin.

The duke led his army to Calais, and in January, 1558, after only a week's siege, the town was stormed and taken from the English, in whose hands it had been for more than two hundred years.

When Queen Mary of England heard that Calais was taken by the French she was lying ill in bed. Her grief at the loss of the town was so great that she became rapidly worse. As she lay dying she said to those who watched beside her, "If my heart is opened there will be found graven upon it the word 'Calais.'"

After his success at Calais, the Duke of Guise soon enjoyed another, though a different kind of triumph. His

niece, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, was married to the Dauphin Francis. This marriage the duke believed would increase his influence both in France and Scotland.

Soon afterwards, in 1559, Philip II. made peace with Henry, for he wished the French king to help him to find out and kill all heretics in France and in his own vast domains.

The Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis was, therefore, signed in April 1559. In this treaty, among other arrangements, was this secret one—that the Guises should do all they could to slay every heretic living in France.

To make the alliance between Henry and Philip more sure, it was arranged that the daughter of the French king should marry the King of Spain.

After the wedding a grand tournament was held near Paris. As King Henry tilted with the captain of his Scottish guards, a splinter of wood broke off the captain's lance, pierced the king's eye, and entered his brain. After a short illness Henry II. died at the age of forty.

CHAPTER LIII

THE PRINCE OF CONDÉ TAKEN PRISONER

THE Dauphin Francis was only fifteen years of age at his father's death. He was already, as you know, married to Mary, Queen of Scots.

By the wish of the queen-mother, Catherine de Medici, the young king, Francis II., chose his uncles, the Duke of Guise and Cardinal Guise, to rule his kingdom until he was able to govern himself.

The Constable de Montmorency and Diana of Poitiers, who had had so much influence with Henry II., were dismissed from the court, where the Guises, with the queen-mother, were now all-powerful.

Those who were Roman Catholics were pleased that the young king had chosen the Guises to rule. They believed the brothers were "called of God" to preserve the Catholic religion in France.

But among the Huguenots, as the Reformers now began to be named from a German word meaning "partners in an oath or covenant," "there was nothing but fear and trembling" at the name of Guise. For well the Huguenots knew that the duke and his brother the cardinal were their bitter enemies.

The Reformers had increased in numbers during the reign of Henry II., and many nobles and great soldiers had embraced the new faith.

Among their leaders the Huguenots could even count a descendant of St. Louis, the King of Navarre. It is true that the King of Navarre was apt to waver between the

two parties; but his wife, Jeanne d'Albret, was heart and soul with the Reformers; and her little son, Henry of Navarre, Prince of Béarn, was brought up in their faith.

The King of Navarre's brothers, too, Cardinal Bourbon and Louis, Prince of Condé, were also on the side of the Huguenots; while, above them all, for his courage, his steadfastness, his unfaltering faith, stood Admiral Coligny.

Until now the Huguenots had been denounced as heretics, but the Duke of Guise condemned them also as rebels against the king. They were forbidden to meet together for prayer, spies being sent all over the country to find out any who disobeyed.

In many villages and towns the Huguenots went as usual to their meeting-places to pray, to sing, to listen to their preachers, and it was easy for the spies to find them out and report them to the Guises.

A little later bands of soldiers would suddenly break into these quiet assemblies, and seize the worshipers. Their houses would be sacked, their children left to starve; while the men and women themselves were tortured, and then killed or banished from the land.

There was no doubt in the minds of the Huguenots that all their sufferings were due to the Guises, and they longed to avenge themselves. Their chiefs met together, some advising war; others, Coligny among them, believing that it would be well still to wait before taking up arms.

In February 1560 an assembly of nobles and burghers of France met together, and resolved that while they would not harm their young king, they would imprison the Guises, who were persecuting "those of the Religion," as the Huguenots were often called, and also doing what they could to crush all other nobles save themselves.

At the head of the conspiracy was the Prince of Condé, he being chosen rather than his brother, the King of Navarre; for Condé was brave and determined, while the king "whatever his thought to-day would repent of it to-morrow."

The prince's share in the plot was to be kept secret until June, when the attack upon the Guises was to take place. Meanwhile Condé was known as the "Mute Captain."

But before the month of June the plot was discovered; and Guise, fearing lest the conspirators should try to seize the young king, removed him to a castle at Amboise, which was at once strongly guarded.

Catherine de Medici now sent for Coligny, he being a known leader of the Huguenots, to consult him as to what should be done.

The admiral obeyed the summons and went to Amboise, taking with him d'Andelot, his brother. Louis, Prince of Condé, whose secret had not been disclosed, also went to the castle to disarm suspicion. He was, however, received coldly, while the Duke of Guise, having no pretext for imprisoning the prince, appointed him captain over the guards at one of the castle gates. There Condé would at least be under his eye.

Left without their leaders, the other conspirators trooped into the woods around Amboise, and succeeded in sending a message to Francis II., telling him that it was the Guises who were the cause of all the trouble in the kingdom, and begging him to send them away.

The Duke of Guise was very angry when he found that his enemies had reached the king.

As for Francis, he was perplexed by the disturbances in his kingdom, and more than once he said pitifully to his uncles, "I don't know how it is, but I hear it said that people are against you only. I wish you could be away from here for a time, that we might see whether it is you or I that they are against."

But the Guises did not mean to go away. Instead, they cruelly duped the young king, telling him that neither he nor his brothers would live an hour if they left; for the Bourbons, that is, the King of Navarre and his two brothers, wished to kill them, that they might themselves ascend

the throne. They made their niece, Mary Stuart, whisper the same things in her husband's ear.

Francis was young and weak. Whether he believed his uncles or no, he said no more; while they, sure of their power, used it yet most cruelly.

For a whole month the Huguenots were cruelly persecuted, the Guises forcing the king and his brothers to watch from the palace window while they were tortured, beheaded, hanged.

Cardinal Guise would even point out to the boy some poor prisoner who was suffering with unusual bravery, not to admire his courage, but to say, "See how bold and mad they are; the fear of death cannot abate their pride. What would they do if they had you in their clutches?"

Throughout the country the indignation against the Guises grew by leaps and bounds. Even their mother could bear the sight of her sons' cruelty no longer. She left the castle of Amboise, saying to Catherine de Medici as she left, "Ah, madame, what a whirlwind of hatred is gathering about the heads of my poor children."

But the duke was not satisfied with his vengeance on the crowd. He wished to wreak his anger on the chiefs of the Huguenots.

He therefore summoned the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé to attend a meeting of the States-General, or, as we would say, parliament.

In vain the friends of the Bourbons begged them not to go where their enemies were numerous. Both the king and his brother resolved to attend the meeting.

They arrived at Orleans, where the States-General was to be held, and their reception was cold enough to warn them of danger.

"Not one of the crown princes came to receive them. The streets were deserted, silent, and occupied by a military guard.

"The King of Navarre, as was usual, presented himself

on horseback at the great gate of the royal abode. It remained closed. He had to pocket the insult and pass on foot through the wicket, between a double row of gentlemen, who looked at him with an air of insolence. The king awaited the princes in his chamber; behind him were ranged the Guises and the principal lords; not a word, not a salutation on their part."

Francis at once led the two Bourbons to the queen-mother, and in her presence sharply questioned the Prince of Condé about his share in the plot.

Condé, brave and cool in the face of danger, said that he was innocent of all of which his enemies accused him, and reminded the king that he had given his word of honor that no harm should befall him at the assembly. But Francis interrupted the prince, making a sign to two captains of the guards, who at once stepped forward and took Condé's sword. He was then led to prison and shut up alone, the King of Navarre being sharply refused when he asked to be allowed to guard his brother.

The prince's trial was begun at once, the Guises wishing to be rid of their dangerous enemy. He was condemned to death, but one, some say three, of his judges refused to sign the death-warrant. So the prince was kept in prison, expecting every day to be led out to execution.

Thinking to get rid of the house of Bourbon altogether, the Guises now determined that the King of Navarre should die.

They arranged that he should have an interview with the king, who would accuse him of helping his brother to plot against the throne.

If the King of Navarre declared that he was innocent, Francis himself was to strike him; or he was to give a sign, and men hidden behind a curtain for this very purpose were to put him to death.

But, "when Francis II. looked into the eyes of the man he was to strike, his fierce resolve died away, and the King of Navarre retired, safe and sound, from the interview."

The Duke of Guise was furious that his enemy had escaped, and muttered wrathfully of Francis, "'Tis the very most cowardly king that ever was."

Then, just when the Guises were most secure, an unforeseen blow struck the power from their hands.

Francis took suddenly ill. For three or four days the quarrel between the Guises and the Huguenots was pushed aside, for the king's life hung on a thread.

In December, 1560, after having reigned eighteen months, Francis II. died. The King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé were saved.

CHAPTER LIV

THE PRINCE OF CONDÉ KILLED

After the death of Francis II., his brother Charles, a boy of only ten years old, became king.

The Guises offered to support the queen-mother as regent if she would allow them to put the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé to death.

This Catherine de Medici refused to do. Without making terms with the Guises she became regent, and ruled France for her little son, Charles IX.

At first the regent tried to pacify the Huguenots by giving them liberty to worship as they please, but she did not altogether quarrel with the Guises, although she thwarted their wishes in many different ways.

The hatred between the Catholics and the Huguenots was not ended by the regent's kinder treatment, and quarrels between the two parties were constantly breaking out. Sometimes it was the Huguenots who suffered, sometimes the Catholics, for whichever side was stronger cruelly persecuted the other.

At length matters came to a crisis. One Sunday, in March, 1562, the Duke of Guise was riding with his troops past the little town of Vassy. Hearing the sounds of bells, he stopped and asked for what purpose they were rung.

"To call the Huguenots to their barn," was the answer.

"Have they many meeting-houses?" asked the duke.

"They are growing up in every town and village of France," he was told.

Then the duke began to mutter and to put himself in

a white heat, gnawing his beard as he was wont to do when he was enraged or had a mind to take vengeance.

However, he went quietly enough to a monastery in the little town and had dinner before he rode down to the barn where the Huguenots were assembled.

The minister was preaching, and the duke ordered him to stop.

But the people, interrupted in their worship, turned fiercely upon the duke, and began to throw stones at him. One hit him, when his troops at once fired on the unarmed Huguenots, and refused to stop, even at their master's command, until they had killed more than fifty persons and wounded two hundred. Nor was their rage satisfied even then. For they next tore in pieces all the French bibles they could find, pulled the pulpit into fragments, and utterly destroyed the barn.

This terrible massacre at Vassy was the introduction to the long religious wars, which lasted for twenty years, and caused great misery throughout France.

When the regent heard of the massacre she forbade the Duke of Guise to come to Paris. But he paid no attention to her command, and entered the capital with as much magnificence as if he had been king. But the massacre of Vassy roused the Huguenot chiefs.

Admiral Coligny and Condé, together with their troops, hastened to Fontainebleau, where the little king then was. They intended to take him away from the influence of the Catholics.

But the Guises had been quicker than the admiral, and had already carried Charles IX. to Paris, telling the regent she might follow or not as she pleased.

Led by the Prince of Condé, the Huguenots then besieged the town of Orleans and took it. Making it for the time their headquarters, they formed themselves into a league, "For the honor of God, for the liberty of the king, and for the maintenance of the pure worship of God."

Both the regent and the Huguenots hoped for foreign help, the Catholics from Spain, the Huguenots from the Protestant German princes and from Elizabeth, Queen of England.

In the war that now began, the Huguenots were at first so successful that they began to think they would soon be the rulers of the country.

Their triumph, however, did not last long. The Catholics were really the stronger, and they soon retook town after town, and at last laid siege to Rouen, one of the strongholds of the Huguenots.

The King of Navarre, who had, for the time, joined the Catholics, was wounded before the walls of the city, and soon after died, leaving his brave wife, Jeanne d'Albret, to bring up their son Henry, the little Prince of Béarn, as he was called from the place of his birth. At this time, 1562, the prince was only nine years old. Being of the house of Bourbon, Henry might possible succeed to the throne of France.

Rouen fell into the hands of the Catholics in spite of all the Huguenots could do; and now, of the many towns they had taken, Lyons and Orleans alone were left in their possession.

In December 1562 the two armies met on the field of Dreux, where a great battle was fought. From one o'clock until five the conflict was fierce, the leaders on both sides being always in the very center of the fight.

Montmorency was wounded and taken prisoner, while, on the Huguenot side, the Prince of Condé was also captured. The troops were then led by the Duke of Guise and Admiral Coligny, both brave and tried soldiers. Guise, however, won the day, and at once marched to Orleans and besieged the city. Before long it was on the point of being taken. Then the Duke of Guise left the camp to ride to a castle a short distance away. As he rode along, confident that on his return Orleans would be his, a shot rang out.

Some one, hidden by a hedge, had hit the duke. He fell forward upon his horse's neck, trying in vain to draw his sword.

The wound was fatal. As the duke lay dying, he begged the queen-mother to make peace with the Huguenots; then, saying that he forgave his murderer, he breathed his last.

But Poltrot, the assassin, was captured; and, while he was being tortured, he declared that his crime had been done by the order of Admiral Coligny.

Coligny denied that he had anything to do with the murder of the duke, but the crime of which he was accused was made an excuse for the terrible fate that soon overtook the admiral and his followers.

Poltrot was put to death, but he was not sorry for the cruel deed he had done; for before he died he was heard to murmur, "For all that, he is dead and gone, the persecutor of the faithful, and he will not come back again."

The regent, with her constable a prisoner, Guise dead, and Orleans still untaken, was wise enough to follow the advice the duke had given her.

By the Edict of Amboise, March 1563, she made peace with the Huguenots, allowing them to worship God in their own way. But shortly after this Catherine brought an army of Swiss mercenaries to Paris, and when the Prince of Condé demanded what she intended to do with her army, the only answer she would give was, "We shall find good employment for them."

The young king, Charles IX., who was now thirteen years of age, was declared to be old enough to rule by himself. He was a tall lad, graceful, intelligent, but easily influenced, and even more easily roused to fits of great anger, when he scarcely knew what he did. And those courtiers and favorites who surrounded the young king were not the ones to mold his character wisely.

For three years after the Edict of Amboise there was peace: then in 1567 a feeling of unrest began to spread

throughout the country. Catherine de Medici was no longer regent, but she still ruled the country through her son. It was whispered that she intended to seize the admiral and the Prince of Condé, that the Swiss soldiers had orders to crush the Huguenots.

The suspense was intolerable, and the Reformers determined to fly to arms to be ready for whatever might happen.

Coligny and the prince therefore set out for Paris with a small force, hoping to besiege the capital and starve it into submission.

But the constable, who was no longer a prisoner, sallied out of the city, determined to dislodge the enemy. He was however killed, and it was his son, the Marshal Montmorency, who forced the Huguenots to retreat.

A short peace followed, but a year later the armies were again on the field, and a great battle was fought at Jarnac.

The old constable being no longer there to lead the royal army, the command was given to Henry, Duke of Anjou, the queen-mother's third son, while by his side fought the young duke, Henry of Guise, eager to avenge his father's death and to win his spurs. Admiral Coligny and the Prince of Condé commanded the Huguenot forces.

Condé, as he prepared to charge the column led by the Duke of Anjou, received a kick, which broke one of his legs. His arm was already crushed by a fall.

Brave and determined as ever, the prince, first showing his wounded limbs to his men, waved above him his standard bearing the word, "Sweet is danger for Christ and for Fatherland," and cried, "Nobles of France, this is the desired moment." Then, with only three hundred horse, he charged the eight hundred lances of the Duke of Anjou.

For a moment the royal forces staggered, so fierce was the attack; but fresh bands of soldiers arrived, one after the other, to support the Duke of Anjou, until Condé's men were pushed back.

The prince's horse had been killed, and he was unable

to mount another because of his broken limbs. Twelve of his comrades gathered round to defend their leader, but, covered with wounds, they were soon taken prisoners.

Condé was left alone, his back against a tree, still defending himself. Feeling that he was growing faint, he surrendered to two Catholic soldiers. The men, whom the prince had helped in other days, swore to save his life.

But the Duke of Anjou's guards, easily known by their red cloaks, were riding hard in the direction of the prince.

Condé saw them, and, feebly raising his arm, pointed toward his enemies.

"Hide your face, prince," cried one of the Catholic soldiers who was guarding him.

Alas, as the captain of the guard galloped by, he heard what the soldier said, and, pulling sharply up, turned, rode back, and shot the helpless prince.

A little later the Huguenots had lost the battle of Jarnac. The Catholics rejoiced when they heard of the death of the great Prince of Condé. Throughout the land thanksgiving services were held in their cathedrals and churches.

CHAPTER LV

ADMIRAL COLIGNY GOES TO PARIS

THE death of the Prince of Condé was a heavy blow to the Huguenots, yet they could not despair while they still had the noble and fearless Admiral Coligny to lead them.

Moreover, Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, no sooner heard of the death of Condé than she hastened to the Huguenot camp, taking with her her son Henry, Prince of Béarn, who was now fifteen years old, and the head of the House of Bourbon. Along with him Jeanne also took the young Prince of Condé, son of the prince who had just perished on the battlefield of Jarnac.

The queen led the two lads, one by each hand, to Coligny, bidding him accept her son as his chief.

Henry was eagerly cheered by the army, while Coligny welcomed the lad with all reverence as one who might some day sit upon the throne of France.

The lad himself, high-spirited and frank, let go his mother's hand, and, stepping before the Huguenot army, said in his clear, boyish voice, "Your cause is mine, your interests are mine; I swear on my soul, honor and life, to be wholly yours." Both princes then took service under Admiral Coligny, who was now made lieutenant-general of the army.

The boys were soon in action, for another great battle was fought at Moncontour in 1569, and again the Huguenots were severely beaten and forced to take refuge in La Rochelle, now the strongest fortress they possessed.

It seemed at first as though the Huguenots could never recover from the terrible defeat they had suffered at Moncontour, but still undaunted, Coligny soon assembled another

army and marched across the east of France, plundering and burning the country.

La Noue, who was one of the bravest and most skillful of the admiral's captains, was threatening the west; while he also commanded that a fleet should be stationed outside La Rochelle, to prevent the enemy from attacking the town from the sea.

The queen-mother, seeing that the enemy was as active as ever, again offered to make terms with them, and the Peace of St. Germain was signed in August 1570.

Such good terms as they now secured the Huguenots had never gained before. Liberty to worship as they wished had been granted to them by other treaties, but now they were allowed to keep and garrison four strong cities, while a general pardon was offered to all who had taken up arms against the king.

Trusting to the royal promises, Coligny and the other Huguenot chiefs now went back to court and behaved, not only as if the war was really over, but as if friendship and trust were restored between the two parties.

There were some among the Huguenots, however, who doubted if the queen-mother was sincere, even though she had signed the Peace of St. Germain.

Catherine de Medici was certainly growing ever more bitter towards the Huguenot chiefs, while she was doing her utmost to make them feel sure of her support.

Admiral Coligny she flattered in every possible way, and, as if to show that she had no longer any dislike for a Huguenot, the queen-mother herself arranged that her daughter Margaret should marry young Henry of Navarre.

Coligny was often with Charles IX. during the days that followed the Peace of St. Germain. And the king, who was easily led, soon showed that the good man's influence had reached him. He would call the admiral "my dear father," and consult him about everything. Little by little the king separated himself from his mother and her party, until Catherine began to fear the influence of Coligny.

The admiral himself grew more and more certain of his hold over the young king, and, when he was warned that he had enemies at court, he refused to believe that Charles would allow any one to harm him.

As for the Guises, they were so much offended at the prospect of the marriage of the king's sister to a Huguenot, and at the favor shown to Coligny, that they withdrew from the court.

Catherine de Medici felt that the time was come to regain her influence with her son.

Charles had gone off happily on a hunting expedition, and his mother determined to follow him. She insisted on being driven with such speed that one of the horses dropped down dead at the end of the journey.

But little did Catherine care. She had found her son, and drawing him aside from his companions the queen-mother burst into tears, reproaching Charles with hiding his plans from her and taking counsel with her enemies. Then, after doing all she could to poison the king's mind against the Huguenots, she begged to be allowed to withdraw from court.

Charles was, as he always had been, much disturbed by his mother's words and tears. He refused to let her leave the court, but still clung to his faith in his "dear father," the admiral.

Meanwhile, as it was August, and the royal wedding was to take place in that month, the court moved to Paris. The Huguenot chiefs, the Guises, and indeed all the nobility of France, were invited to the capital.

Coligny was entreated not to risk his life at Paris, but, sure of the king's goodwill, he refused to listen to the warnings of his friends.

The Guises, too, returned to court; but although the two parties seemed to be friendly, the Guises in reality hated the admiral, and still believed it was he who had planned the murder of Francis, Duke of Guise.

CHAPTER LVI

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY

In August 1572 the royal wedding took place. Three days later, Coligny, as he was walking to his lodgings, was shot at from a window by a servant of the young Duke of Guise. The admiral was, however, but slightly wounded.

When Charles heard what had happened, he was playing tennis with the duke. In one of his violent fits of anger, he dashed his racket to the ground, breaking it to pieces, while he cried, "Shall I never have rest then?" He went to see Coligny the same day, and was with him a long while, telling him how grieved he was at the accident, and how determined he was to punish the Guises for the outrage. Thus the admiral's trust in the king remained unbroken.

But in this attack on Coligny, Catherine saw her chance. She went to her son and convinced him that the Guises would certainly accuse him of having encouraged the attack on the admiral, and that the Huguenots would then once more fly to arms.

"It would be better," said the cruel queen-mother, "to win a battle in Paris, where we hold all the chiefs in our clutches, than put it to hazard in the field."

For more than an hour and a half Charles was true to the admiral, and refused to allow any attack to be made on the Huguenots.

But when Catherine burst into tears, and again threatened to leave the court, his mother's influence proved too strong for the unstable king.

In one of his wild fits of passion he now rose from his

seat, crying, "Since you think proper to kill the admiral, I consent, but all the Huguenots as well, in order that there remain not one to reproach me afterwards. Give the orders at once."

Catherine de Medici was not the woman to hesitate. It was Saturday when the king spoke. The next day, Sunday, August 24, 1572, the Feast of St. Bartholomew, was fixed for the awful deed.

The Guises were well pleased, only they wished that the Bourbons and the Montmorencies might be slain as well as the Huguenot chiefs and their followers. This Catherine sternly forbade.

As for the king, he went to the Louvre, where he had had a forge set up, and worked with all his strength that he might tire himself, and so forget what in his mad fit of anger he had recklessly allowed to be done in his name.

On the morning of Saturday, August 23rd, the streets of Paris were crowded as was usual, but as the evening crept on apace a strange feeling of danger seemed to haunt every corner and doorway. Strange shadows flitted stealthily hither and thither. People moved and spoke as though under a sense of some great impending horror, they knew not why.

The admiral, serene in his unconsciousness of the influences that had made the king break faith with him, went early to bed on Saturday night, ill and restless, but untouched by ominous forebodings.

Suddenly, between one and two o'clock on Sunday morning, a bell rang out upon the stillness of the summer night. It was the signal agreed upon by Catherine and her followers for the assassination of all the Huguenots in Paris.

No sooner had the single bell sounded than, at once, from every belfry in the city an answering bell was heard.

Clang, clang, loud and insistent the noise fell upon startled ears, until at length the city awoke, wide-eyed, to

see everywhere armed men with torches, bearing in their hats or on their sleeves a white cross, the badge of the Cardinal Guise.

Then followed horrors of which I cannot tell, save that every Huguenot, and many as well who knew nothing of the new faith, men, women, little children, all whom the queen-mother's soldiers or the Paris mob could find, were cruelly put to death.

Admiral Coligny was one of the first to perish. He had been sleepless, and when the bells rang out he did not take long to guess what they foretold. He quickly rose, put on his dressing-gown, and said to the Huguenot minister who had been sitting by his bed, "Pray for me. I commend my soul to my Saviour. I have long been prepared for death."

Then, unselfish to the last, he bade his terrified servants go try to save themselves. And they obeyed, running upstairs, and so on to the roof of the house.

Almost at once the door of the bedroom was burst open, and a young man belonging to the Guises entered, saying, "Art thou not the admiral?"

"Young man," answered Coligny, "thou comest against a wounded and aged man. Thou'lt not shorten my life by much."

Almost before his brave words were uttered, the admiral was stabbed to death and his body flung out of the window into the street below, where the Duke of Guise waited with impatience to make sure that his enemy had perished.

By dawn the terrible work was wellnigh done. Paris was as a city of the dead. In the provinces the Huguenots had also been slain.

The palace itself had been the scene of many a painful death. Even there no Huguenot was spared, save the surgeon of the king and Charles's old nurse. To his surgeon, Charles, whose remorse had already begun, said, "I wish the helpless and the innocent had not been included."

In the church of St. Peter, at Rome, a thanksgiving service was held because so many heretics had been slain.

But when a little later the Pope heard how the Huguenots had been entrapped and sent unaware to their death, he wept.

"When certain of my lords, the cardinals who were beside him, asked wherefore he wept, and was sad at so goodly a dispatch of those wretched folk, enemies of God and his Holiness," he answered, "I weep at the means the king used, exceeding unlawful and forbidden of God, for to inflict such punishment. I fear that amongst so many dead folk there died as many innocent as guilty."

All Europe was aghast at the terrible massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, and from none save Philip II. did Charles receive any sign of approval. He in his zeal offered to send soldiers, should the French king need them, to complete the destruction of the Huguenots.

After that never-to-be-forgotten Sunday in August, Charles IX. had no peace of mind.

To escape from the memory that haunted him, he would hunt for twelve or fourteen hours, stopping only to eat and snatch a few moments to sleep, or he would work for long hours at his forge.

Two unhappy years passed slowly away, and then, in the spring of 1574, Charles fell ill.

His Huguenot nurse watched over him and slept in his room during his illness.

One night, "when she had lain down upon a chest and was just beginning to doze, hearing the king moaning, weeping, sighing, she went full gently up to the bed.

"'Ah, nurse, nurse,' said Charles, 'what bloodshed, what murders! Ah, what evil counsel have I followed! O my God, forgive me them, and have mercy upon me, if it may please Thee.'"

Then the kind old nurse comforted her young master,

telling him the guilt lay upon the heads of those who made him do the deed. "Of yourself, sire, you never would," she said, begging the poor king to cease weeping.

"And thereupon she fetched him a pocket-handkerchief, because his own was soaked with tears."

In May 1574 Charles IX. died, having made Catherine de Medici once again regent over the kingdom of France.

CHAPTER LVII

HENRY OF NAVARRE ESCAPES FROM PARIS

HENRY, Duke of Anjou, brother of Charles IX., now became king.

A year before the death of his brother, Henry had been chosen King of Poland, and had gone to Cracow, the Polish capital, to be crowned.

Henry had no love for his adopted country, and when he heard that Charles was dead, he was eager to return to France.

His Polish subjects were strange, rough people, so at least thought the Duke of Anjou. They might not be willing to be left without a king. So without staying to give up his crown, Henry stole away one midnight from Cracow, followed only by a few servants.

At first he walked quietly and without haste, as though he were taking a stroll before going to bed, but soon he reached a place where horses awaited him and his attendants.

Mounting with eagerness he galloped away, riding all night and never drawing rein until he had left the capital far behind.

When it was known that the king had gone, there was a great uproar.

Noblemen and peasants, armed with staves and scythes, set out to chase the royal runaway. Henry, however, had had too good a start to be caught, and the Polish people never saw their king again.

It was the month of June when Henry ran away from Cracow; it was September before he reached Paris. The weeks between he had spent in Italy, amusing himself in ways that ill became a king.

France had looked forward with hope to seeing Henry reign, for he had been brave and manly on the battlefield. But before long it was plain that Henry III. was a different person to Henry, Duke of Anjou. The king had lost his manliness. "He no longer rode on horseback; he did not show himself amongst his people as his predecessors had been wont to do. He was only to be seen shut up with a few favorites in a little painted boat, which went up and down the Saône; or he would spend whole days shut up in his palace, playing with lap-dogs, monkeys, parrots, and surrounded by favorites as foolish and idle as himself."

The court, during the reign of Henry III., was not only idle, it was wicked. Yet sometimes into the king's heart there would steal a little sorrow for his unkingly ways. Then he would dress himself in sackcloth, walking thus, barefooted, with his companions, along the streets of Paris; and as they walked the little company would scourge one another with whips, as a penance for their sins.

Meanwhile, in this idle, wicked court the king's younger brother, now called the Duke of Anjou, was forced to spend his days. He had ever been kind to the Huguenots, and because of this Henry III. feared him and planned to have his brother slain.

But the duke, hearing of the plot against his life, escaped from the Louvre by a window, and hastened to join a large number of nobles and citizens who called themselves "Malcontents." Among the Malcontents were both Catholics and Huguenots, who had banded themselves together to resist the king's folly and expose the treachery of the queen-mother.

The Queen of Navarre having died shortly before the marriage of her son, Henry was now King of Navarre. He, too, had been kept at court since the terrible massacre of St. Bartholomew, but the evil lives of the nobles had displeased him, and he determined to escape.

Having joined a hunting-party, Henry of Navarre, instead of returning to the palace, galloped away to find his followers,

saying, "I return to Paris no more unless I am dragged there by force."

From this time, 1576, Henry of Navarre proved himself a strong and able leader of the Huguenot cause.

Meanwhile, the Catholics grew alarmed at the strength of the Huguenots. Henry of Navarre was their chief; Henry, Prince of Condé, was on their side, as well as Montmorency, son of the old constable, who had quarreled with his own party. When the Duke of Anjou also joined the Huguenots, Catherine advised the king to make a treaty with them, which he did in 1576.

This treaty, which gave the Huguenots greater freedom than they had yet enjoyed, was called the "Peace of Monsieur," probably because the king's brother, who was often called "Monsieur," gained some benefits from it.

The Catholics throughout France were very displeased with the "Peace of Monsieur," and they formed a Holy League to protect the true or Catholic faith. At the head of the league was the Duke of Guise.

But the duke meant to do more than guard the Catholic faith. By the help of the league he hoped to depose Henry III., and if he himself might not bear the title of King, he yet hoped, like the ancient Mayors of the Palace, to rule over the kingdom.

When in 1584, however, the Duke of Anjou died, leaving only Henry of Navarre, a Huguenot, as the heir to the throne, the Duke of Guise may have dreamed that the crown of France would soon rest upon his own head.

Meanwhile, the king and the queen-mother had little to do either with the Malcontents or with the members of the league. They stood aside and formed a small party of their own, until 1585, when the league had become so powerful that Henry thought it would be well to make terms with its head, the Duke of Guise.

So in July the king signed the Treaty of Nemours. You

will be able to imagine how the Huguenots felt when they found that by the Treaty of Nemours, "the practice of the new religion was forbidden, and that there should henceforth be no other practice of religion throughout the realm of France, save that of the Roman Catholic faith."

The treaty was a challenge, and the Huguenots were not slow to answer it. They flew to arms, and the "War of the Three Henries" now began.

Henry of Valois, King of France, was one of these Henries, Henry of Bourbon, King of Navarre, was another, the third being Henry, Duke of Guise, who was soon after named the King of Paris.

Henry of Navarre left La Rochelle, the stronghold of the Huguenots, with a small army, hoping to join his allies, the Germans. But Henry, King of France, had sent a force under his favorite Joyeuse against the Huguenots.

Joyeuse succeeded in overtaking Henry of Navarre at the town of Coutras before he had joined his friends. The royal army was large, but the soldiers were for the most part raw lads who knew nothing of war, while Henry's men were old and tried veterans.

As might have been foretold, the valor and discipline of the Huguenot troops soon overcame the untrained recruits led by Joyeuse, who was himself slain, while his army was utterly destroyed.

Unfortunately after this great victory the King of Navarre did not hasten to join the Germans, and they were defeated by Henry, Duke of Guise, who finally drove the foreigners out of France.

The royal army, which had been so successful under the leadership of Guise, then went back to Paris, where it received a welcome worthy of its victories over the Germans. Henry III., however, was treated with disdain. Had not his chosen captain Joyeuse been defeated, and was not the triumph of the royal army due to the Duke of Guise alone? The citizens sent for the duke to come to Paris.

CHAPTER LVIII

THE KING OF PARIS

HENRY III. was alarmed by the cold greeting of his subjects. Moreover, a few days after his return to the capital, the Sorbonne, the famous college of Paris, decreed that "the government might be taken away from princes who were found not what they ought to be."

The decree had a sinister sound in the king's ears. He feared what might happen if his rival the duke came to Paris, and he forbade him to enter the city.

But Guise laughed at the king's order, knowing that he was unable to enforce it. In a few days, in defiance of his king, he boldly came to the capital.

It is true that he entered the city quietly, hiding his face with his cloak, but he was soon recognized and cheered at every step. Before long a crowd gathered around him, flowers were thrown upon him from the windows, a young girl, pushing through the crowd, kissed him, crying, "Brave prince, since you are here we are all saved."

Tall and fair, with curls clustering around his brow, the hero went straight on toward the Louvre and, unattended, was led into the presence of the king.

"What brings you thither?" asked Henry III. haughtily. "I commanded you not to come."

"I entreat your Majesty," answered the duke, "to believe in my fidelity, and not allow yourself to go by the reports of my enemies."

The king allowed the duke to leave the palace in safety, but neither his anger nor his fear was allayed. He ordered

his Swiss troops to guard the Louvre more closely. This was an unfortunate move, for it roused the indignation of the Paris mob.

Before the Swiss could reach the palace, chains were stretched across the streets leading to the Louvre, while great barricades of timber and paving-stone were run up around it. The day was called the "Day of Barricades."

So angry was the mob that it attacked the Swiss soldiers, who at length laid down their arms. The rabble then hastened toward the palace, meaning to attack the king himself, but the Duke of Guise rode among them unarmed, carrying only a white stick in his hand, and, for he was the idol of the citizens, soon succeeded in calming their fury.

Being now, in reality, King of Paris, Guise sent for the queen-mother, hoping to make terms, through her, with the king.

Catherine de Medici came and used all her wiles to make the duke listen while she talked to him of many different things, for while she talked and he listened, the king was escaping from Paris, vowing that he would not enter the city again, save through a hole in the wall.

But it was useless for Henry III. to be angry. Guise was all-powerful, and in July 1588 the king was forced to sign the Edict of Union, making the duke Lieutenant-General of France, dismissing his own favorite, and promising to take up arms against the Huguenots.

Every one, even the duke, knew that Henry signed the Edict only because he could do nothing else. Rumors soon began to steal about that the king would not rest until his enemy was slain.

Again and again Guise was warned that his life was in danger, but he refused to take any precautions.

In December 1588, as the duke sat down to dinner, he found a note under his table saying, "The king means to kill you."

Guise asked for a pen, and wrote beneath the words he

had read, "He dare not," then carelessly flung the note under the table.

Two days before Christmas, Henry III., who was still at his castle of Blois, rose early and, going to a secret staircase, he let nine guards enter. Leading them to his own room he hid them behind some curtains, first giving to each a dagger.

That same day the Duke of Guise, with only a few friends, rode to the castle to attend a meeting of the council. He was told that the king wished to see him alone. Pulling his cloak around him, the duke went fearlessly to the king's room.

As he reached the door, he stooped to raise the curtains, when at once the assassins sprang from their hiding-place and stabbed him. Henry of Guise paid for his fearlessness with his life.

The Cardinal of Guise was killed the following day, and many of the nobles belonging to the League were imprisoned.

At the next council meeting Henry III., as he entered the room, looked around at all the members, and then in a voice of triumph he said, "I am now sole king."

A little later he went to see the queen-mother, who had been ill and knew nothing of what had happened.

"How do you feel?" asked her son.

"Better," she answered.

"So do I," replied the king. "I feel much better; this morning I have become King of France again; the King of Paris is dead."

"God grant," she answered, "that you become not king of nothing at all."

A few days later Catherine de Medici died, her power, to gain which she had done so many cruel deeds, all useless and outworn.

Henry III. soon found that the death of his enemy had not helped his cause. Many cities rose in revolt against him, led by the Duke of Mayenne and the Duke of Aumale,

brothers of the murdered Duke of Guise. The Sorbonne, too, declared that he had no right to wear a crown, and the Pope excommunicated him.

As his mother had feared, Henry was now king "of nothing at all." In vain Henry tried to make terms with members of the League. They turned from him in hatred, for he had slain their chief.

Then in April 1589 the hapless king turned to Henry of Navarre, and begged him to come to his aid.

Henry of Navarre, because he loved his country and wished for her sake that war might soon cease, promised to help the king against his enemies. In wise, brave words he spoke to the people of France, begging them to forget their own quarrels and ambitions for the sake of their country and their king.

Henry of Navarre then joined Henry III. Together they marched against Paris and encamped with a large army at St. Cloud, where the French king could see "quite at his ease his city of Paris."

"Yonder," he cried, pointing to the city, "is the heart of the League; it is there that the blow must be struck. It is a great pity to lay in ruins so beautiful and goodly a city. Still, I must settle accounts with the rebels who are in it, and who ignominiously drove me away."

Paris was in dismay when she saw the two kings and their army approaching the capital. Yet in the hearts of every Catholic there was fierce resentment against the King of France, for he had made friends with a Huguenot to save his crown.

The clergy in the city preached vehemently against this new alliance; they even said that Henry III. ought to be killed. One young monk, named Jacques Clement, brooded over what he heard, until he believed that to slay the king would be to do God a service.

Paris was to be stormed on the 2nd of August. On the 1st, Jacques Clement went to St. Cloud and begged to speak

with the King of France, for he had private tidings for his ear alone.

And so the monk, just because he was a monk, was admitted to the king's presence, and before Henry was aware, Jacques had drawn a dagger from his sleeve and stabbed him.

"Ah, wicked monk, he has killed me! Kill him!" cried the king, and at his voice the guards rushed in and the monk was slain.

Jacques Clement had done his work well, for the wound proved fatal, Henry III. dying the next morning, August 2, 1589. With him perished the last of the kings of the House of Valois.

CHAPTER LIX

THE PRINCE OF BÉARN

In Paris there was great joy when it was known that the king was dead. Bells rang, bonfires blazed. Madame de Montpensier, sister of the murdered Duke of Guise, drove through the streets of the city telling the good news. "The tyrant is dead, dead!" she cried exultantly, for she had hated the murderer of her brother.

At St. Cloud the great army was full of excitement. The Huguenots to a man greeted Henry of Navarre as King of France. But by far the larger number of the soldiers were Catholics, and while one Catholic noble said to the Huguenot chief, "You are the king of the brave; you will be deserted by none but dastards," others were not so open-minded, and murmured, "Better die than endure a heretic king."

Henry of Navarre, who on the death of Henry III. was the true heir to the throne of France, was born in a camp, amid the thunder of cannon, the beating of drums, and the noise of trumpets.

His grandfather, Henry d'Albret, after whom he was named, was a tall strong prince, greedy of power and of lands.

Around his neck Henry d'Albret always wore a little gold box or casket. In this box he had locked his will. His daughter Jeanne, who became the mother of the Prince of Béarn, used to tease her father to tell her what was in the gold box.

The old man promised to give her the casket if, at the time her child was born, she sang a song of Béarn.

And Jeanne, who was strong and brave, did not forget to sing while her little son was laid in her arms.

Henry d'Albret at once took the gold box from off his own neck and hung it around Jeanne's, but as he carried off the key, his daughter was still left to wonder over its contents.

For a cradle the babe was rocked in a large turtle-shell, for which he quickly grew too big and strong.

The little Prince of Béarn was not brought up in a palace, nor fed on dainty fare. He ran wild with the peasant children of the village, bareheaded, barefooted too as they. His food also was the same as theirs—black bread, beef and garlic—and on these he throve apace.

You have already read how, when he was fifteen years old, Jeanne d'Albret took her son to the Huguenot camp, where the lad boldly claimed the soldiers' cause as his own. This was the prince who in 1589 became Henry IV., first of the Bourbon line of kings in France.

There was, however, much to be done before Henry IV. could enter into his inheritance, for the League was stronger than ever, being helped by many of the French provinces as well as by Philip II. of Spain. Philip, who was a Catholic, refused to acknowledge a Huguenot prince as King of France.

Henry IV. and his army did not stay long at St. Cloud after the death of Henry III. Breaking up their camp they marched into Normandy, where many towns received Henry as king.

At Arques he met and defeated the troops of the League, under the Duke of Mayenne. Yet the duke had been heard to boast that he "would either drive the man of Béarn into the sea or bring him back in chains."

Before the battle one of the Leaguers had been taken prisoner. Looking at Henry's army he was surprised, it seemed so much smaller than the one led by the Duke of Mayenne.

"Ah," said the king, when he heard what his prisoner thought, "you do not see all our forces. You don't reckon the good God and the good right, but they are ever with me." This happy trust often stood Henry IV. in good stead.

In October 1589 Henry again marched on Paris, but the Duke of Mayenne had already entered the city and, joining the Leaguers, forced the king to withdraw.

Henry IV. was not discouraged. Many provinces, both in the east and south of France, had now taken an oath of allegiance to him. Moreover Queen Elizabeth of England, as well as the Netherlands, had sent him money to pay his soldiers, more money than he had ever had before, Henry frankly confessed.

The following year, 1590, another great battle was fought at Ivry, a plain near the town of Nantes.

As the king rode along the ranks, he halted and said to the men, "Comrades, if you run my risks, I also run yours. I will conquer or die with you. If you lose your standards, do not lose sight of my white plume; you will always find it in the path of honor, and I hope of victory too."

Then, having galloped along the whole line of his army, he halted once more, threw his reins over his arm, clasped his hands and prayed aloud: "O God, Thou knowest my thoughts and Thou dost see to the very bottom of my heart. If it be for my people's good that I keep the crown, favor Thou my cause and uphold my arms. But if Thy holy Will have otherwise ordained, at least let me die, O God, in the midst of these brave soldiers, who give their lives for me."

With such a leader as this the soldiers were ready to fight to the death, and although the army of the League was, as usual, far larger than the king's, numbers did not seem to be of much account, so bravely fought the royal army.

Once, it is true, the king was nearly overwhelmed, and

his troops actually began to waver. But calling to his men to follow, Henry dashed recklessly at the very center of the enemy's position.

Seeing the white plume of their king before them, the soldiers followed fast, and the attack of the Leaguers was checked. Nay, more than checked, or presently the troops were sent to stumble, to hesitate, and then to turn and flee. The victory of Ivry was won by Henry IV. and his gallant troops.

No quarter was given to either Spanish or German soldiers, but the French prisoners were spared by order of the king. The Swiss also were set free, for Henry IV. remembered that they had often in the past been friendly to the crown of France.

Henry now marched again on Paris, taking St. Denis in July 1590. He would fain have won the goodwill of the people of Paris without a siege, but they determined to resist the "heretic" king to the very end.

So Paris was besieged, and before long the citizens were suffering terribly from want of food. Not even dog-flesh or horse-flesh could be had, and the people in desperation did as Madame Montpensier advised, ground any bones they could find into powder and made bread with it as though it had been flour.

Great as the misery was, it would have been greater had not the king taken pity on the poor starving folk, and more than once allowed provisions to be sent to them. He also let six thousand old men, women and children leave the city to find food and shelter elsewhere.

"Paris must not become a cemetery," said the kind-hearted king. "I do not wish to reign over the dead."

The suburbs were soon in Henry's hands, and Paris itself was on the brink of being seized, when the King of Spain thought it was time to interfere, lest a Protestant became in reality King of France.

One of Philip's greatest captains, the Duke of Parma,

was therefore sent to relieve Paris, and take provisions to the starving inhabitants. This the duke did, and Henry IV. was forced to raise the siege. Then he marched to Rouen and began another siege beneath its walls. Again the Duke of Parma defeated his plans.

The war dragged on until the following year, when the States-General met, determined that it should end.

Philip II., although he knew the Salic law, urged that his daughter, the Infanta Elizabeth, should be made Queen of France.

While the States-General hesitated to place a woman on the throne, Henry IV. determined to take a step from which he had often ere now shrunk. He felt that it was the only way to save his country from the evils of civil war.

For her sake the king determined to give up the new religion in which his brave mother, Jeanne d'Albret, had reared him, and to become a Roman Catholic.

Often during these weeks he talked to his chief counselor, the Duke of Sully, and ever he was anxious not to offend or grieve the Huguenots who had fought by his side so long and so faithfully. And when the Huguenot ministers came to beg him not to forsake them, he received them as friends.

"Kindly pray to God for me," he said to the ministers, "and love me always. As for me I shall always love you, and I will never suffer wrong to be done to you or any violence to your religion."

And so at length it came to pass, one summer day in July 1593, that Henry IV. went in state to hear Mass in the cathedral of St. Denis.

At the door of the cathedral he was met by the archbishop.

"Who are you?" the archbishop demanded.

"I am the king," answered Henry.

"What want you?"

"To be received into the bosom of the Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church."

"Do you desire it?"

"Yes, I will and desire it."

Then, kneeling down, the king was absolved by the archbishop, who said the benediction over the bowed head of the penitent.

Afterwards the king arose, no longer a heretic, and was led by the clergy to the altar. Here he confessed, heard Mass, and was reconciled to the Church.

When the service was over, the cathedral rang with the shout of loyal citizens, "Hurrah for the king! hurrah!"

CHAPTER LX

RAVAILLAC STABS THE KING

As soon as Henry IV. had become a Catholic, city after city gladly acknowledged him as king. Indeed, before a year had passed, France had, for the most part, paid allegiance to him, and war had ceased.

In 1594 the king was crowned in the cathedral of Chartres, for Rheims, where the kings of France were usually crowned, was one of the few cities which still refused to acknowledge Henry IV. as king.

From Chartres Henry went to Paris, where the gates were flung wide to welcome him. As he walked through the streets, the people flocked ever more closely around him. "Let them come near," said Henry, "they hunger to see a king."

With true kingliness he made the day he entered his capital a day of gladness even to his enemies.

The Duchess of Montpensier, who had done her utmost to injure his cause, Henry forgave. He also allowed the Spanish troops to leave the city unharmed. As they passed out of one of the city gates Henry watched them from a window.

Catching sight of the monarch, the soldiers saluted with their swords. Henry returned the salute, saying, "Go, gentlemen, and commend me to your master, but return no more."

Philip II., however, still refused to acknowledge Henry as king, and he did all in his power to stir up discontent in France, pretending that the throne was still empty, and

urging the claims of the Infanta Elizabeth. France was too loyal to listen to Philip II., and at length in 1595, angry with his behavior to their king, the country declared war against Spain.

The King of Spain behaved rather as a spoiled child when the declaration of war reached him. He petulantly insisted that he was not the enemy of France, but only of the Prince of Béarn and the Huguenots. But so childish a protest could not save him from war, and Philip, seeing France take up arms against him, speedily sent Spanish troops into France to join the army of the League, which still existed, though its power was much less than it used to be.

Henry, with his usual recklessness, fell upon the enemy at Fontaine-Française with only a handful of men, and won a brilliant victory. And this is how the victory was won.

Marshal Biron had been sent forward to find out the strength of the Spanish army. The king was only a short distance off, when the marshal saw on a little hill about sixty of the enemy's cavalry keeping guard. Biron attacked and overthrew them, and then, taking possession of the ground he had captured, he saw to his dismay that the whole Spanish army as well as the troops of the League were marching towards him. Before them they were driving a hundred or so of Henry's cavalry.

The marshal awaited the enemy, but their numbers forced him to retreat, and soon he was within sight of the king who, seeing what had happened, sent a few of his already small force to support Biron.

These also were driven slowly back upon the king, who now knew that he would be forced to fight the main body of the Spanish army.

It would be a battle fought not for glory, but for life itself.

With his few hundred horse Henry threw himself upon

the enemy, his men fighting as gallantly as did the king himself.

The Spanish soldiers, in confusion at the fierceness of the attack, tumbled backwards upon one another and retreated in disorder to the Duke of Mayenne's army.

At the same moment the duke saw a body of horsemen rush up to the king's assistance, and thinking the whole royal army was at hand, he at once gave the order to retreat. Thus with a mere handful of men Henry IV. had beaten the Spanish army, and forced Mayenne's troops to withdraw.

But after this victory the Spanish carried everything before them, and Henry's fortunes were at the lowest ebb when a heavy blow fell upon Philip.

The Pope, who until this time had refused to give the Prince of Béarn absolution, now sanctioned all that had been done in the cathedral of St. Denis.

The Catholic nobles had thus no longer any reason to withhold their allegiance from Henry IV. The League was dissolved, even the Duke of Mayenne coming over to the king's side.

Henry, being sure of the nobles, now grew careless of his country, and gave himself up to an idle life. Banquets and fêtes seemed for the time to satisfy the soldier king. And while the king laughed and danced the days away, the Spanish army still stayed in France, besieging a town here, another there, and sometimes taking them too.

Then all at once, in March 1597, the king was roused from his idleness.

Amiens, an important city close to Paris, had been taken by the Spaniards.

The blow roused the fighting spirit of the king. With the Duke of Sully's help he speedily assembled an army and hastened toward Amiens. He was determined to regain the city.

It was March when it was taken by the Spaniards.

In September it surrendered, and was once again in the hands of the French.

This was the end of the struggle, and peace was made at Vervins, Spain giving back to France all that she had taken from her during the war, except one town. In the following year, 1598, Philip II. died.

Before the war ended Henry IV. found that all his money had been needed to pay his soldiers. You will hardly believe that a king could be so badly off as Henry was before peace was declared. He had actually no money, no clothes, no food. He wrote plainly enough to the Duke of Sully to tell him of his distress. Here are his own words:

"I wish to tell you the state to which I am reduced, which is such that I am very near the enemy and have not, as you may say, a horse to fight on, or a whole suit of harness to my back.

"My shirts are all torn, my doublets out at elbows, my cupboard is often bare, and for the last two days I have been dining and supping with one and another; my purveyors say that they have no more means of supplying my table, especially as for more than six months they have had no money. Judge if I deserve to be so treated and fail not to come. Adieu, my friend, whom well I love."

Never have you read of a king in sadder plight.

War being ended in 1598, the Huguenots thought that it was time the king should listen to their grievances. They had been more or less dissatisfied ever since Henry had become a Catholic, but of late their discontent had increased.

They wrote to Henry telling him that they often had to suffer unjustly, and that much evil was done to them by the Catholics: "Stem then, sir, with your goodwill and your authority, the tide of our troubles. Accustom your kingdom to at least endure us, if it will not love us."

To this appeal Henry's answer was to sign, in April 1598, the famous Edict of Nantes.

By this Edict the Huguenots were allowed to worship

in their own way everywhere, save in some few towns which had belonged specially to the League. They were permitted to hold positions of trust at court and in the government of the country in the same way as were Catholics. They were also free to garrison many of their towns, in which they had already built churches and schools.

Having satisfied the Huguenots, Henry, with Sully's aid, next tried to reduce the taxes, which during the wars had weighed heavily on his subjects. He also saw that marshes were drained and good roads and bridges made all over the country, while in many towns he built colleges and fortresses.

Mulberry trees too were planted, on the leaves of which silkworms feed. In this way the silk industry was encouraged, while factories were built for silk-looms, as also for linen, lace, gold cloth and the glass industries.

Thus under Henry IV. France became prosperous, her people contented. The king had often been used to say that he would like "every peasant to have his fowl in the pot on Sundays," and now his wish had come to pass. If his subjects had not actually each a fowl, at least they had good and wholesome food.

In 1610, for one reason and another, Henry IV. felt that he must again go to war, not only with Spain but with Austria. So he assembled three great armies, appointed his wife, Mary de Medici, whom he had lately married, regent in his absence, and prepared to set out. But his wife begged him to wait for her coronation, which was to take place at St. Denis in the month of May.

The king was strangely disturbed at being delayed in Paris. He confided his troubles to Sully. "My heart tells me that some misfortune will happen to me. I shall die in this city. Ah, wretched coronation, thou wilt be the cause of my death." Thus he talked to his minister, telling him too that it had been foretold that he would be

killed in his carriage at the first grand ceremony at which he was present.

However, in spite of misgivings, the king stayed in Paris and attended the coronation at St. Denis. On the following day he went in the royal coach to visit the Duke of Sully, who was ill.

In one of the narrow streets the carriage had to go slowly to allow a cart to pass.

Suddenly from one of the doorways a man named Ravaillac darted out, threw himself upon the king, and before any one could interfere stabbed Henry twice.

It was as the king had feared—nevermore would he leave his capital.

Slowly the carriage turned back toward the Louvre, but before the palace was reached Henry IV. closed his eyes, "without opening them again any more."

"I tell you nothing about the queen's tears; all that must be imagined. As for the people of Paris, I think they never wept so much as on this occasion. They ran hither and thither along the streets, distraught with grief, crying, 'The good King Henry is dead, the good King Henry is dead!' "

CHAPTER LXI

THE ITALIAN FAVORITE

Louis xiii. was only nine years old when his father was so cruelly murdered. As he was too young to rule, his mother, Mary de Medici, became regent.

Sully, who had served Henry iv. so well, soon found that the regent did not wish his help to govern the kingdom.

Her favorites were two Italians, Concini and his wife Leonora. Concini the regent made Marquis of Ancre as well as a Marshal of France, and, proud of his title and position, Concini grew more and more insolent to the French nobles.

Sully watched the regent and her favorites wasting the treasures he had stored up in the Bastille for time of war, and showed his disapproval. But Concini resented his presence at court, and was so rude to the former minister that at length the duke went away and lived quietly in the country for the rest of his life.

But the nobles, led by the Prince of Condé, soon rebelled against the tyranny of Mary de Medici and her favorites.

Concini thought it was an easy matter to pacify these nobles by bribing them with large sums of money, and they, sad to tell, fell before the temptation, and were soon ready to agree to anything the regent cared to propose.

The nobles had, however, wrung from the marshal a promise that the States-General should meet. But this assembly, when it did meet in 1614, did little to help the troubles of the people, and is only famous because it was the last time the States-General met for one hundred and

seventy-five years, and because among its members sat Armand du Plessis of Richelieu. This Armand du Plessis became in time Cardinal Richelieu, and was, in reality, king in all but name during the larger part of the reign of Louis XIII.

Two years after the meeting of the States-General the young king married Anne of Austria. This marriage had been arranged through the influence of Concini and was disliked by the nobles, who again rose in rebellion. The favorite was forced to buy peace this time with larger bribes than before. He also promised to reform his council, and into the new council Armand du Plessis was admitted. He was at this time Bishop of Luçon.

The young prelate had been trained as a soldier. But while he was still quite young he was offered a living if he would become a priest. Armand accepted the offer, and studied so diligently that when he was only twenty-one years of age he was made a bishop.

Armand was fond of splendor and display now, as well as when in after-years he became Cardinal Richelieu.

Unfortunately his see was in a small village, which he himself tells us was "the poorest and the nastiest in France."

Nevertheless the young bishop determined to enter Luçon in what he considered fitting style. He had no money to buy a coach, so he borrowed one, and a coachman and horses as well. Thus he was able to drive to his see as he thought a bishop should.

Poor as he was, he also made up his mind to buy a velvet bed. It was not new, but it cost less money for that reason, and being grand it satisfied Armand du Plessis.

In those early days, too, the bishop would not be content without silver dishes in his house, no fewer indeed than two dozen of "fair size" he must possess.

"I am a beggar, as you know," he wrote to a friend, "but at any rate when I have silver dishes my nobility will be considerably enhanced."

While Richelieu was settled at Luçon he often went to court, and month by month his influence over Mary de Medici increased, until by degrees it was the young bishop's strong hand that upheld her Italian favorites against the anger of the nobles and the hatred of the people.

Meanwhile the king was growing up. When he was sixteen he was no longer willing to be ruled by Concini. Yet the marshal, wishing to increase his influence with the lad, began to arrange his games and his walks. He even wished to choose Louis's companions, but to this the boy-king would not submit.

As Concini perhaps feared, Albert de Luynes, the king's falconer as well as his favorite, had no love for the marshal, and did all he could to encourage the king's dislike.

One day matters came to a crisis. Concini so far forgot himself that he kept on his hat in the king's presence as they played a game of billiards together, saying:

"I hope your Majesty will allow me to be covered." De Luynes, who was present, scowled at the man's insolence.

Louis pretended not to notice Concini's rudeness, but his anger was great, and de Luynes carefully fanned it, until the king was ready for anything that would rid him of the Italian.

So one day, with the king's consent, the captain of the guard, taking with him several of his officers, each with a pistol in his pocket, went to the Louvre, and, finding the marshal, took hold of him, saying, "Marquis, I have the king's orders to arrest you."

"Me," said the marquis, utterly unprepared for such a blow, and trying to shake himself free from the captain's grasp; but even as he struggled he was shot dead by the officers.

When de Luynes heard what had happened he hastened to the king and said, "Now are you truly King of France, Marshal de l'Ancre is dead."

Louis XIII. was too glad to be his own master to blame

those who had killed Concini. Without delay he announced that now he would himself govern his kingdom, and the regent and her adviser Richelieu were sent away from court.

Albert de Luynes at once became the king's chief adviser. Louis bestowed upon his favorite the title of duke, and from this time until his death he was all-powerful, and did almost as he wished with the monarch.

It was not long before the duke was as bitterly disliked as Concini had been. In their hatred of de Luynes the nobles rallied round the queen-mother, and it seemed as though there would be civil war in the country. But the duke recalled Richelieu, who acted so wisely that he reconciled the regent and the nobles with the king, and for the time war was averted.

This reconciliation was not lasting. Before long the queen-mother's court was again the center of plots against the king and his favorite.

Then Louis roused himself. With something of the spirit of his father, he marched at the head of his army against his mother and those who supported her.

Mary de Medici also assembled an army, and marched with it to meet her son. Her soldiers were untrained, and the king might easily have crushed the revolt had Luynes not persuaded him to treat with the rebels.

Again Richelieu was asked to make peace between Mary de Medici and her royal son, and again he was successful; so successful, indeed, that the mother and son who so lately had been in arms against each other, met and embraced.

"God bless me, my boy, how you are grown," said the queen.

"In order to be of more service to you, mother," gallantly answered the king.

But after this meeting Louis went back to Paris, the queen to Anjou, and thus there were still two courts. Some of the nobles were on the king's side, others on the side of the queen-mother.

Richelieu had long seen that while the king and his mother held separate courts the country would never be at peace, and he urged Mary de Medici to go to Paris. As for Louis, he was willing to receive his mother if she would forsake the nobles who were continually plotting against his throne.

So, owing largely to Richelieu's influence, in August 1620, Mary de Medici went to Paris, and the revolts of the nobles came to an end.

Luynes was now made Constable of France, although he was quite unfit to lead an army. Richelieu at the same time hoped to be rewarded for the help he had given to the king and the queen-mother.

His heart was set on becoming a cardinal, and the Pope was even now choosing ten of his clergy for this honor. Surely Mary de Medici and de Luynes would speak on his behalf.

The queen-mother did indeed write to the Pope, and so also did the duke, begging that the Bishop of Luçon should be one of the successful candidates.

But at the same time as the Pope received these letters, he also received one from the king, saying that he wished Richelieu still to remain a bishop.

This was the doing of the duke, who, afraid to refuse to use his influence on the bishop's behalf, was yet determined that Richelieu should not become too powerful. It was he who had persuaded the king to write to the Pope.

Louis himself was not anxious that the Bishop of Luçon should be promoted. He believed he understood Richelieu better than the queen-mother.

"I know him better than you, madame," he said to his mother, "he is a man of unbounded ambition," and in that the king was right.

CHAPTER LXII

THE SIEGE OF LA ROCHELLE

You remember that Béarn was the birthplace of Henry IV., the father of Louis XIII. It had been a Protestant state since the days of the brave Queen of Navarre. Her grandson had decreed that the Catholic religion should be the only form of worship in Béarn, and the Huguenots had at once taken arms to fight for freedom to worship God in their own way.

In 1621 the king marched with his constable and a large army against the daring rebels. But fever crept into his camp and attacked not only many of the soldiers, but the Constable Luynes himself, who died after only three days' illness.

The constable had been hated by the nobles, yet because he was so powerful many had stooped to win his favor. When he lay ill, his power slipping from his grasp, no one cared for him enough to attend to his wants. His own servants would not stay in the room with him, but leaving the door open, went in and out as they pleased, as though the sick man was one of themselves.

The war against the Huguenots still lingered on after the constable's death, until October 1623, when the Edict of Nantes was confirmed.

La Rochelle and Montauban were the only fortified towns left in the hands of the Huguenots. These they were allowed to garrison, and even to shut the gates against the royal troops and the king himself should they so desire.

A year before the war ended Richelieu's wish had come

true. He had become a cardinal, and since the death of the Duke of Luynes no one had greater influence with the king than he.

In 1624 the cardinal was asked to attend the king's councils. He was now thirty-nine years of age, tall and frail in body, but with a will that nothing could bend, much less break.

Richelieu begged that as he was delicate he might give Louis his advice while still living at a distance from court. To this the king would not listen, and so Cardinal Richelieu came to Paris. From that day until his death he ruled France.

The new minister had three chief objects in view. He wished above all other things to destroy the Huguenots, to humble the nobles, and to weaken the House of Austria. Louis had married Anne of Austria, and it is not surprising to find that the queen was disliked by the great cardinal.

As has happened so often in this story, the king's favorite soon found that the nobles disliked him just because he was a favorite. Their jealousy awoke, and they eagerly joined the king's brother, Gaston, Duke of Anjou, in a plot against Richelieu's life.

But the cardinal had spies everywhere, and the plot was discovered, the Duke of Anjou meanly saving himself by betraying his companions. For this base act Richelieu persuaded the king to give his brother the Duchy of Orleans and a large pension.

Meanwhile the cardinal began to carry out his plans against the Huguenots by besieging their chief stronghold, La Rochelle.

The Huguenots appealed to England for help, and a fleet led by the Duke of Buckingham at once set sail for France. Queen Anne, who was a friend of Buckingham's, encouraged the duke to thwart Richelieu's plans in every possible way.

But the cardinal had, as I have told you, a relentless

will in his thin spare body, and he now bent every nerve to take the besieged city. Germany, Spain, Austria, all were left undisturbed, even the rebellious nobles might do as they pleased until La Rochelle should yield.

The English fleet meantime arrived, but after a fierce fight Buckingham was defeated, and in November 1627 he went home to England. The French had captured many English flags, and these were carried on Christmas Day with great rejoicings to the church of Notre Dame in Paris.

Meanwhile the citizens of La Rochelle made John Guiton mayor of their city. Guiton had once been a merchant, but lately had led a more adventurous life as a sea-pirate. He accepted the trust the citizens offered him, throwing his dagger on the council-table as he did so, and saying:

"I accept the honor you have done me on condition that yonder poniard shall serve to pierce the heart of whoever dares to speak of surrender."

Guiton then sent to Richelieu to ask that all the women might leave the town. But the cardinal refused, saying, "All the Rochellese shall go out together."

Louis was in the camp with his resolute soldier-cardinal, watching his unflinching face as the heavy winter seas again and again washed away the entrenchments he had ordered to be flung up around the city.

It was the cardinal and not the king who ruled the camp. Under Richelieu's eye the soldiers were as well behaved as on parade. Not a home or a farm in the neighborhood of the camp was disturbed or plundered, the men being well fed and well disciplined.

All the while that the cardinal worked so persistently to take La Rochelle, he knew that at any moment all his labor might be lost.

It needed but a sea a little rougher than usual, or a stormy west wind, and his barriers would be blown to pieces. It needed but an English admiral more daring than Buckingham, and he might never hope to take the city.

And the citizens of La Rochelle were looking for fresh help from England. Before long another fleet, under the Earl of Denbigh, lay outside the harbor which Richelieu had now succeeded in closing with a solid bulwark of stone. But the English tried in vain to relieve the town.

Twice they attempted to blow up the barricade, but all their efforts were useless, and the citizens of La Rochelle to their dismay saw the English turn and sail away.

By this time Louis had grown tired of the camp, tired too, perhaps, of the influence of his minister, and he had gone back to Paris.

Then, while the king was away, Richelieu had not a moment's peace. No one knew better than the cardinal how fickle Louis was, how weak.

In Paris he would be surrounded by the nobles who were the minister's enemies, by the queen-mother too, who, jealous of Richelieu's influence, was no longer his friend.

The cardinal knew well that there was nothing to prevent his fall save his hold on the unstable king and his own iron will.

But the danger passed. Louis came back to camp, apparently still pleased with his warlike cardinal. He found that La Rochelle was now being starved into submission.

So great was the misery in the town that the gates were opened that the women, children and old men might go out to try to find food.

In their desperate hunger they came timidly to the enemy's camp, but the king ordered them to be driven back into the town, for Louis XIII. fought his subjects in other ways than did his Father Henry IV.

Even the cardinal was forced to admire the determination of the citizens, and when at length, after holding their city for about twenty-five months, famine forced them to plead for terms, Richelieu was not harsh in his treatment of the brave defenders.

The walls of the city were indeed broken down and all her privileges taken away, save only that the Huguenots were still allowed to worship in their own way.

When Louis entered the conquered town the streets were strewn with the dead, for none had had strength to bury them, while those of the garrison who were still alive were unable to hold a pike, to such weakness had hunger brought the strongest.

The capture of La Rochelle was a great triumph for Richelieu. It increased, if that indeed were possible, his power and influence with the king.

CHAPTER LXIII

THE DAY OF DUPES

La Rochelle had no sooner been taken than the king set out with an army to Italy. The desire of conquest had taken hold of him.

The cardinal rode by his side on a noble war-horse, clad in armor of blue steel, his pistols slung at his saddle-bow.

Abroad, as at home, Richelieu won victories for France, sometimes by his sword, at other times by his pen. But keen-sighted as he was, the cardinal did not notice that the king was growing jealous or his minister's fame.

Little by little Louis began to listen to the queen-mother's complaints about the cardinal and to the slanders of his enemies.

At length, when both king and minister had returned from Italy, Louis seemed to fall completely under the influence of his mother, and actually signed an order sending Richelieu into exile.

No sooner had he done so than he began to wonder how he would get on without the minister on whom he had depended so long and so entirely.

Wishing to forget the matter, the king rode off to hunt, and instead of returning to the Louvre, he stayed all night at the palace at Versailles.

Meanwhile Mary de Medici, giving no thought to the fickle character of her son, did not hide her triumph at the cardinal's fall.

She called her friends around her, promising that this post should be given to one and that to another. Together

with Queen Anne she told the court that Richelieu would even now be preparing for flight, if he had not already fled, and there were few who did not rejoice that the great cardinal's power had come to an end.

The queen-mother's joy, as well as that of the court, was short-lived. For the cardinal, knowing as usual what was going on around him, hastened at once to Versailles and demanded to be taken to the king.

Louis was perhaps more glad than sorry to see his minister, yet at first he found it difficult to look in his face.

The cardinal had been in the room but a few moments before the king was sure that he had indeed been foolish to dream of dismissing his powerful servant.

The order banishing Richelieu was speedily countersigned, and Louis, with something like a sigh of relief, put himself once again under his minister's influence.

Rumors soon reached Paris that the cardinal was with the king, and restored to his favor.

Then indeed there was confusion at court, the queen-mother and her friends seeing how foolish they had been to think that they had thus easily got rid of the great cardinal, Henceforth November 11, 1630, the day on which Mary de Medici had made her great mistake, was known as the "Day of Dupes," a dupe being one who has been deceived.

Richelieu now saw more clearly than ever that as long as the queen-mother was at court, her intrigues would never cease. As he could not order her to leave Paris, he himself left the capital with the king. Louis must not again be left alone to struggle against or yield to the queen-mother's influence.

Mary de Medici followed the cardinal to Compiègne, where he and the king had stayed to rest for the night, and thus Richelieu gained his end.

Early the next morning, while the queen-mother, tired with her hurried journey, still slept, the cardinal and the king rode back in hot haste to Paris. When the queen-

mother awoke it was to find that she was alone in Compiègne.

From Paris, Louis wrote to his mother asking her not to return, his request being really a command. Mary de Medici, banished from the French court, wandered first to one foreign country and then to another, receiving only a cold welcome from strangers.

Although she was the mother of a king, she soon had neither friends nor money, and at length she took rooms in the house of a shoemaker at Cologne. Sixty years before, the great painter Rubens had been born in this very house. Here Mary de Medici died, sad and alone, save for one servant who attended to her needs.

It was not until she was dead that Louis XIII. seemed to remember that Mary de Medici was his mother. Then he ordered her body to be brought to France, where amid great pomp it was laid to rest.

The cardinal had still to guard against the plots of those who hated him, and the favors showered upon him by the king did not tend to lessen the number of his enemies.

While Richelieu was created a duke, a peer, and also made Governor of Brittany, the other nobles found that positions of trust were gradually taken from them, and their power decreased on every possible opportunity. So they resolved to make one more effort to crush their enemy.

The revolt was led by Henry de Montmorency, though he had received gifts from both the king and the minister. It seemed that nothing could save the country from civil war, for the provinces had only been waiting for a leader to fly to arms.

But the cardinal was swift as ever to check the conspirators, and almost before their plans were formed they seemed to be discovered.

Montmorency was in Languedoc with a band of soldiers when the king's army overtook him. A fierce battle was fought, but the son of the old constable of France was taken,

covered with wounds. His rank could not save him from his fate. He had proved a traitor to his king, so he was tried and executed in 1632. Even his enemies were sorry for the brave soldier who went to his death proud and unashamed.

Richelieu was now at the height of his power, and his enemies at home being crushed, he had time to turn to foreign affairs.

In Germany the Thirty Years' War was being fought. It was a religious war, carried on by the Protestant princes in Germany against their emperor, who was a Catholic.

Richelieu, who in France had fought against the Huguenots, now took the side of the Protestants, promising to raise four large armies and to send them to the help of the German princes.

At first the French soldiers were beaten by the great German generals. In 1638, however, the tide began to turn, and the French armies won several battles near the Rhine and also in Italy, while three years later the French were everywhere triumphant.

Turenne, a young French general who afterwards became famous, won his first success in this war with Germany.

At home one more plot was made against the life of the great minister. It was arranged by Cinq-Mars, a mere lad, who was a favorite with the king. That he might overthrow Richelieu, Cinq-Mars even entered into a secret treaty to betray his country to Spain.

Richelieu, who was never strong, was at this time suffering from a severe illness. Both he and the king, who was also ailing, were travelling by different ways toward the Spanish frontier.

The cardinal, though ill, was as alert as ever, and knew all the details of Cinq-Mars' plot. Louis also knew something of his young favorite's plans, and Cinq-Mars believed that the king would uphold his treachery. But the time had long gone by when Louis would fail his minister, even

though at times he might grow restless under his control, as the sharp eyes of Cinq-Mars had seen.

Knowing that the cardinal was ill, the king sent him a kind and reassuring message, lest he should be troubled about Cinq-Mars' behavior.

Richelieu on receiving the king's message, at once sent him a copy of the secret treaty which Cinq-Mars had dared to make with Spain.

This decided the king. He ordered the young favorite to be arrested. Then, hastening to the cardinal, he conferred on him the title of Lieutenant-General of the Realm, with powers almost equal to his own.

But Richelieu did not long enjoy his new dignity. Already he was slowly dying. His servants carried him to a barge, that he might be taken quietly up the Rhone to Lyons.

Behind him, in another barge, were his two prisoners, Cinq-Mars and De Thou. De Thou, though innocent, had been condemned with his friend. Up the river the barges slowly went their way, the cardinal, like the Roman conqueror of old, leading his prisoners to death. When they reached Lyons the young men were beheaded as traitors.

Richelieu then returned to Paris, but he was so weak that he had to be carried in a litter.

It was a sad procession that slowly wended its way along the streets, for not a voice was raised to cheer the dying cardinal. The people of Paris had never learned to love, but only to dread the hard, relentless ruler of their country and their king.

On the 2nd December 1642 the cardinal became so ill that prayers were offered in all the churches for his recovery.

When Louis came to say good-by to his minister, who had served him so long and so well, Richelieu said, "I have this satisfaction, that I have never deserted the king, and that I leave his kingdom exalted and his enemies abased."

He then recommended Cardinal Mazarin to his master, saying, "I believe him to be capable of serving the king."

As the sacrament was brought to him, the sick man stretched out his hand and said, "There is my Judge, before whom I shall soon appear; I pray Him with all my heart to condemn me if I have ever had any other aim than the welfare of religion and of the State."

Cardinal Richelieu died on the 4th December 1642, and Louis XIII. lived only a few months after his great minister.

The king's little son, who was barely four years old, was christened while his father lay dying.

"What is your name, my son?" asked Louis XIII.

"My name is Louis XIV.," answered the child.

"Not yet, my son, not yet," murmured the dying king.

But Louis XIII. did not seem sorry to die. He lay in his own room, his windows open, looking toward the Abbey of St. Denis. "Let me see my last resting-place," he said, as his courtiers gathered around his bed.

In the glad month of May 1643, Louis XIII. laid down his crown, and his little son became in truth Louis XIV.

CHAPTER LXIV

THE WARS OF THE FRONDE

Louis xiv. was only four years old when his mother, Anne of Austria, brought him to the Parlaiment of Paris.

The little king, who had learned his lesson well, told the members that he had come to show his goodwill, but his uncle, the Duke of Orleans, would say all that was necessary.

Queen Anne was then made regent. As her chief adviser she chose Cardinal Mazarin, although he had been a faithful servant of Richelieu, whom for many years she had so bitterly disliked.

The nobles were not at all pleased with the regent's choice, for Mazarin was an Italian, who could not even speak French like a Frenchman. But neither their displeasure nor their plots did Mazarin much harm, and before long he was the real ruler of France.

When Louis xiii. died, war was still going on between France and Spain.

Spain thought that now the great cardinal was dead it would be easier to beat the French armies. She therefore laid siege to Rocroy, a town on the borders of Flanders.

The young Duke of Enghien, who was barely twenty-two years of age, commanded the French army. It was he who later was known as the Great Condé.

"Dying with impatience" to fight, the young duke led his army so close to the Spanish troops that it was impossible to avoid a battle, though older heads than his would have deemed it wiser to wait.

The night before the struggle began Enghien sat over the camp-fire talking with his officers, and only in the early morning did he snatch a little sleep.

No sooner was he awake than he led his men to battle. "Mark him as he flies to victory or death. He was seen almost in the same moment, driving in the enemy's right, rallying the half-beaten French, putting to flight the victorious Spaniards, striking terror everywhere and dumbfounding with his flashing looks those who escaped from his blows."

With such a leader the French quickly routed the right and the left wings of the Spanish troops. There was still a solid square of Spanish infantry, which until now had proved invincible on every battlefield.

Three times the Duke of Enghien threw himself against this solid Spanish wall, three times he was beaten back. For the fourth time he rallied his men and dashed upon the enemy, and then at length the dreaded square broke to pieces, and the Spanish soldiers were slain in thousands. Slain, for they would neither retreat nor ask for quarter.

The battle of Rocroy took place in the month of May 1643.

Two years later the Duke of Enghien, along with Marshal Turenne, who you remember fought in the Thirty Years' War, won two great battles.

In one of these the duke fought with his usual daring and rashness, so that two horses were killed under him, and but for the greater caution of Marshal Turenne the victory would have been lost.

Success after success made the Duke of Enghien ever more ambitious. He was already one of the richest, haughtiest nobles in France, and Cardinal Mazarin began to fear that when peace was made Enghien would come to Paris and wrest from him his power.

In 1648 the Peace of Westphalia brought the Thirty Years' War to an end, and the duke, now by his father's death the Prince of Condé, did indeed return to France.

Meanwhile Mazarin was growing more and more unpopular. He wasted the money Richelieu had saved, and then laid new taxes on the people. At length, when he declared that all provisions brought into the capital by land or by water would be taxed, the Parliament of Paris refused to allow this new burden to be laid upon the citizens.

Anne of Austria was so angry with the Parliament for resisting her minister's decree that she ordered Broussel, who had led the revolt, to be arrested.

But Broussel was beloved by the people of Paris, and no sooner did they hear that he was arrested than they shut their shops, barricaded the streets and began to rush up and down shouting, "Liberty and Broussel! Liberty and Broussel!"

The regent, finding that the citizens were determined to have their way, was forced to yield and set Broussel free. But she was too angry to stay in Paris among her rebellious subjects. Taking with her Mazarin and the little king, she left the capital and went to St. Germain. The palace there was unfurnished, with scarcely a bed fit for the queen to sleep on, yet she did not appear to notice any discomforts. She seemed to have left all her anxieties behind her at Paris.

Meanwhile, in 1648, a foolish strife called the War of the Fronde had begun to occupy the nobles and citizens of Paris. You may wonder why this war was called the War of the Fronde. A fronde was a sling used by the little street-boys of Paris in their mimic battles, and the battles of the Fronde were sometimes no more serious than the combats of the little boys of Paris.

It was rare for the citizens to fight side by side with the nobles, and at first they thought it was a great honor. They never doubted that the lords were serious in their efforts to free Paris from the tyranny of the regent and Mazarin. But soon the citizens began to see that the skirmishes between the Royalists and the Frondeurs were more for fun and laughter than anything else, while the

funds which the people had given to the Frondeurs were wasted on banquets and balls. It was true that the court ladies, among whom was Mademoiselle de Montpensier, better known as La Grande Mademoiselle, invited the citizens to their assemblies, but this honor scarcely atoned for their wasted money.

At length Matthew Mole, the President of the Parliament, went to the regent and tried to arrange terms of peace. He was not very successful, and when he went back to Paris the mob threatened to kill him, although he had always done all he could to help them.

Soon after this the queen-mother, grown tired of her exile, made peace with the Parliament and returned to Paris. The old Fronde, as it was called, now came to an end.

The Prince of Condé came to the capital with the regent, and she would fain have kept the haughty noble at her side. But the prince hated Mazarin too much to stay with the regent, so he founded a separate party for himself. The Prince of Condé's party was called the "Young Fronde," and to it belonged the young and discontented nobles.

As Condé had deserted her, the regent persuaded Turenne to take the command of the Royalist troops.

Then the Young Fronde, with Condé at its head, assembled an army, hoping to overpower Turenne and seize Paris.

The prince had thrown up a great earthwork, near the gate of St. Antoine, to protect his men. Here Turenne attacked him, took the earthwork and steadily pushed Condé backward. It seemed that the prince must either be taken or killed.

La Grande Mademoiselle was in Paris with the troops of her father, the Duke of Orleans, encouraging the Fronde with all her strength. "Condé was in a pitiable state," she tells us. He had two finger-breadths of dust on his face, and his hair all matted. His collar and shirt were covered

with blood, although he was not wounded. His breastplate was riddled all over and he held his sword bare in his hand, having lost the scabbard.

"You see a man in despair: I have lost all my friends," said the prince to mademoiselle.

La Grande Mademoiselle told him that his friends were not so seriously wounded as he thought, and after having comforted the great soldier, she sent him back to his men, while she hastened to the Bastille.

Here she ordered the commander to load the guns which were directed upon the city, and to fire as soon as she was gone.

She then went quickly to the gate of St. Antoine. When Prince Condé's men saw La Grande Mademoiselle, they shouted, "Let us do something that will astonish them; our retreat is secure. Here is mademoiselle at the gate, she will have it opened for us if we are hard pressed."

At that moment the cannon of the Bastille sent ball after ball crashing down upon the royal troops, until they were thrown into confusion.

The Prince of Condé seized the moment to make a fresh effort, and he and his men reached the gate of St. Antoine, which mademoiselle had thrown wide open. Thus the prince and his men reached safety within the walls of the city, and were able to make it their own.

But the Prince of Condé was so cruel to the citizens that they soon revolted against him and made peace with the regent.

Condé, too proud to ask for pardon at her hands, accepted a post in the Spanish army, and thus the "war of the Young Fronde" came to an end in 1653.

The Prince of Condé and Turenne were now on opposite sides, and fought against each other in Spain and Flanders.

As a rule Turenne was more than a match for the prince, but in 1656 Condé, at the head of the Spanish troops, defeated the French.

Meanwhile, Mazarin having made a treaty with England, Cromwell promised to send his well-trained Ironsides to help the French against their Spanish foes.

In 1658 the last battle in this war was fought on the sand-dunes near Dunkirk.

Condé saw that the Spanish troops had encamped on the shifting sand-banks, and urged their commander to move to more solid ground. The Spanish officer refused and Condé knew that his chance of victory was so much the less.

Turning to the young Duke of Gloucester, the son of Charles I., who was serving in the Spanish army, Condé said, "My lord, did you ever see a battle?"

"No, prince," answered the English lad. "Well, then, you are going to see one lost," answered Condé.

As the prince foresaw, so it was. At the Battle of the Dunes the Spanish were totally defeated, and soon after they begged for peace, which was made in 1659 at the Treaty of the Pyrenees.

By this treaty it was agreed that Louis XIV. should marry Maria, the Infanta of Spain, but that the two crowns of France and Spain should never be worn by the same king, The marriage took place in 1661, and shortly after Cardinal Mazarin died. His great wealth he left to be divided between his seven nieces. He also founded a college for the education of children of noble birth, and to this college he bequeathed his splendid library.

CHAPTER LXV

THE DILIGENT KING

LONG before the death of Cardinal Mazarin, Louis XIV. had said, "The cardinal does just as he pleases, and I put up with it because of the good service he has rendered me, but I shall be master in my turn."

Now that Mazarin was dead, the king's turn had come, and he soon showed that he did indeed mean to be master.

Never was there a king who worked as Louis XIV. worked. He had heard of the Sluggard Kings of long ago, and had no patience with them, saying petulantly, "I do not like those Do-Nothing kings who were led by the nose."

Eight hours a day this busy monarch gave to the work of the State, his councilors being little more than clerks.

Nothing was allowed to be signed without Louis's permission.

"I warn you," he said gravely to his secretaries, "not to sign anything, even a safety-warrant or passport, without my command, and to report every day to me personally."

At first the courtiers laughed to one another at the industry of their king, thinking it was but a passing mood. But soon they grew wiser, seeing Louis meant to persevere. And indeed, for fifty-four long years, Louis XIV. carried the burden he had lifted on to his shoulders without a murmur.

His work brought its own reward, as work well done will always do. Even of the first early days after the death of Mazarin, he wrote, "I found myself quite another being. I discovered in myself what I had no idea of. Then it dawned upon me that I was king and was born to be."

Mazarin had had insight enough to foretell the true character of the young king, who, while the cardinal was alive, had seemed so indolent.

"He will set off late, but will go farther than others," he said. "He has in him the stuff of four kings and one honest man."

For several years before the death of the cardinal, Fouquet had been Minister of Finance, that is, he had looked after the public money of the kingdom.

Mazarin had warned the king that Fouquet was dishonest, using public money for his own purposes, while the queen-mother had not scrupled to call him a thief.

One of Louis XIV.'s first acts was to study the finances of the State. He found that Fouquet's public accounts were not correct, and that he had gathered together a large amount of wealth for his own use.

Indeed Fouquet, hoping to win the favor of the king, asked Louis to a splendid banquet at his country house. Here Louis saw for himself the reckless extravagance of the feast, as well as the pictures, the statues and other treasures which the minister had bought with the money he had filched from the State.

The splendor surrounding Fouquet roused the king's jealousy as well as his anger. He ordered the minister to be arrested and his papers examined. It was said that among them was a plot against the king's life.

So Fouquet was tried on a charge of treason, and found guilty. He was then sent to prison and kept in a dreary dungeon for the rest of his life.

Colbert, a simple burgher and an honest business man, now took Fouquet's place. He reduced the taxes which were driving the people to desperation, yet in a few years he had increased the money in the king's treasury. This he did by encouraging the industries of the country, among others silk, glass and china. He also ordered a large fleet to be built, as well as harbors and roads. You see, in these

days the Minister of Finance had a great deal to do with spending the public money as well as filling the king's treasury.

In Colbert, Louis XIV. had a servant after his own heart, save that sometimes the luxury and extravagance of the court drove the minister to complain to the king himself.

"A useless banquet at a cost of a thousand crowns causes me incredible pain," he once wrote to Louis. "The right thing to do, sire, is to grudge five sous for unnecessary things, and to throw millions about when it is for your glory."

It was useless, however, for Colbert to speak to the king of economy, for, though Louis worked hard, he knew how to enjoy himself when work was over.

He spent huge sums of money on transforming the hunting-lodge at Versailles into a beautiful palace, and when the building was finished he gave balls and banquets that cost fortunes.

Soon, too, foreign wars began to engross the king's attention, and on these wars he spent more money than he had spent on his pleasures.

In 1665 the King of Spain died, and Louis at once claimed the Spanish provinces of Flanders and Brabant for his wife, the Infanta Maria, though at his marriage he had given up all right to any Spanish possessions.

The Spanish king was only a little boy of four years old, but his ministers refused the demands of the French king. So in 1667 Louis assembled a large army, and sent it under General Turenne to seize Flanders and Brabant.

Turenne had little fighting to do, for town after town threw open its gates to the great general.

But Louis XIV. was ambitious, and could not now be content with these provinces. The glory of war had become a passion, so that the year after Flanders and Brabant had been taken by Turenne, the king assembled

another large army, giving the command this time to the Prince of Condé, who had been reconciled to his country.

Into Franche Comté, a country belonging to Spain, but which was called "Franche" or "Free" because it really ruled itself, marched the French army under the Great Condé.

Franche Comté lay between Switzerland and Burgundy, and Condé took care that no rumor of his march should reach the country before he arrived. Stealing quietly upon the inhabitants, he speedily forced them to surrender.

Other countries now began to be alarmed at the greed with which Louis XIV. snatched up new dominions for France. So England, Sweden and Holland entered into a Triple Alliance, determined to force him to make peace with Spain.

In 1668 Louis, finding these three great Powers against him, signed, with no good grace, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, by which he gave back Franche Comté to the Spaniards.

But if the Dutch expected to escape the wrath of the French king for interfering with his schemes, they soon found out their mistake. Before many years had passed, Louis raised a large army, and, with Turenne and Condé at its head, sent it into the Netherlands.

With the French army there was also a soldier called General Martinet, who drilled his soldiers so sternly, and whose discipline was so severe, that his name has come down to us as a byword. So if some day you hear a stern schoolmaster or a strict colonel called "a regular Martinet," you will know from whom the strange name comes.

It was in 1672 that Louis sent his army into the Netherlands. At that time the President of the Dutch Republic was the Prince of Orange, who was soon to become William III., King of England.

When he heard that the French had taken all the frontier towns and had besieged Amsterdam, the prince ordered

the dikes to be broken down and the sluices to be opened. When this was done the sea rushed in over the country, right up to the walls of Amsterdam, and the Dutch fleet was able to sail to the relief of the city.

Even Louis XIV. could not help admiring the resolute courage of the Dutch, who had sacrificed so much rather than yield to the enemy.

The war still dragged on until 1674, when Louis, with Holland still in arms against him, was forced to withdraw. But the king did not yet mean to return to France. Instead he again marched into Franche Comté, and for the second time took it from the Spaniards. General Turenne he sent across the Rhine to fight against the Germans.

The great general marched through one of the most beautiful provinces of the Rhine, called the Palatinate, destroying the towns, the villages, the farms, the vineyards, so that for years the peasants hated his name. This cruelty is the one stain on the name of the French general.

In 1675 Montecuculi, a great German commander, was sent to punish the French. The two armies met at Sasbach, on which town Turenne had forced the Germans to fall back.

General Turenne was very sure of victory, and, as he gave his men his last orders before the battle began, he cried, "I have them, they shall not escape again."

The battle began. Turenne sat under a great tree, up which he had ordered an old soldier to climb, to tell him of the enemy's movements.

At length a message came begging Turenne to join his men, who were sore pressed. The general sent reënforcements, and a little later leaped upon his horse and galloped toward his troops.

"I don't at all want to be killed to-day," he is said to have kept repeating, as he drew rein in a hollow to avoid the balls of the enemy.

Alas! as he moved forward to look at the German defenses a ball struck him. He went on a few paces and then fell from his horse, dead.

His soldiers, seeing that their general was killed, were so grieved that their bitter cries were heard "two leagues away."

Montecuculi knew what the cry meant, and halted, taking off his helmet as he said, "To-day a man has fallen who did honor to man."

Without its leader the French army was soon beaten, and forced to retreat before the victorious Germans.

CHAPTER LXVI

LOUIS XIV. PERSECUTES THE HUGUENOTS

General Turenne was dead; the Prince of Condé had retired from the army. Yet although Louis had lost his two great generals, he determined again to make war on Holland.

The new commander of the French army was the Duke of Luxemburg, who defeated William of Orange on land, while at sea the French were also victorious over the Dutch fleet. Then in 1678 Louis took Ghent and Ypres, when the Dutch in despair begged for peace. So the Treaty of Nimeguen was signed by France and Holland, while a little later Spain also agreed to the treaty, giving up to the French king Franche Comté, as well as eleven Flemish towns. Two years later the Emperor of Austria also made peace with Louis, who then went back to Paris to receive the adoring worship of his subjects.

They, pleased with their king's victories, called him Louis the Great, not staying to think if he had any real right to the title. Whether he was generous or unselfish, pitiful or just, did not trouble them at all.

The glory he had won in battle brought glory to their country, and so they worshiped Louis the Great, and erected a statue of him in the great square of Paris. There he was to be seen, seated upon his throne, the peoples he had conquered in chains around his feet.

A few years after the Peace of Nimeguen, Louis's wife, Maria Theresa, died. The poor queen had never been very happy, as the king had often neglected her or treated her with scorn. For many years he had admired Madame de

Maintenon, one of his children's governesses, and he now married her. Her conversation was so charming, her wit so sparkling, that she gained great influence over the king. Though she was never called the Queen of France, yet she was queen in all but name, and through Louis she ruled the country.

Madame de Maintenon was a strict Catholic, and gave the king no rest until, in 1685, he promised to revoke the Edict of Nantes. She had no idea of the terrible outbreak of persecution that this would cause. The Edict, you remember, had been granted to the Huguenots by Henry IV., and allowed them almost all the rights enjoyed by Catholics.

Now, however, Louis XIV. revoked the Edict, ordering all Protestant ministers to leave France, and forbidding any worship save that of the Catholic Church.

The Huguenots themselves were not allowed to leave the country, but dreading the persecutions which they knew awaited them, numbers managed to escape to Holland or England.

Linen weavers, woollen weavers, silk weavers, all the industrious folk of France settled down to their looms and trades in the new homes to which they had been forced to flee. England and Holland were the richer for their presence, France the poorer for their loss.

That it was difficult to escape, that if they were captured they would become galley slaves, kept few from trying to leave the country. For even their homes were now no longer their own. The king's cruel soldiers entered them when they chose, and were often encouraged by their captains to behave as rudely as they pleased.

Let me tell you of one woman who, driven to desperation, determined to escape. Every gate was guarded, every road watched. How could it be done? At last she had an idea. Going to an ironmonger, she begged him to pack her inside a load of iron rods.

It was done, and the rods were taken to the custom-house to be weighed, the merchant paying for the unwieldy package in the usual way. In this strange manner the woman escaped from France, the rods not being unpacked until she was six miles from the frontier.

Many slipped out of the country by traveling at night, while others made their way to the coast, bribing rough sailors to take them away in their boats, anywhere on the rough seas, so only that they might escape the cruel soldiers. Louis, with all his titles to greatness, was really very foolish, because he lost many of his most industrious citizens, who worked hard and paid their taxes with good grace.

The princes of Europe were indignant with Louis XIV. for his persecution of so many simple, industrious folk, and in 1686 the German princes, with Austria, Sweden, and even Spain, joined together in the League of Augsburg to punish the French king.

Louis speedily assembled an army, and before his enemies could prevent it, he sent it, under General Luxemburg, into the beautiful country of the Palatinate, which Turenne had once before destroyed. Again the farms were pulled down, the fields and the vineyards trampled on and ruined, while the peasants were left to wander homeless and hungry.

The Germans were thoroughly roused, for this was the second time the French had overrun the Palatinate. So they made a Grand Alliance with William of Orange, who was now King of England, and he came with a large army to help the Germans in their war against France.

Again and again Luxemburg defeated the English, but William III. was too skillful a general to let the French gain much good from their victories.

For three years the war lasted, then, the misery in both France and England being great, peace was made at Ryswick in 1697. Louis XIV. was forced to acknowledge William III. as King of England, and to give up all the towns he had won in the Netherlands and beyond the Rhine.

You may wonder why the French monarch agreed to such hard terms. It was because a new ambition had taken hold of Louis, and he cared for little save only this new desire, which was to wear the crown of Spain.

Charles II., who was King of Spain, was dying without an heir to succeed to his great kingdom. Louis, having married the eldest sister of the Spanish king, thought that he had a right to the crown, in spite of having promised that the same king should never rule at the same time over France and Spain.

The Emperor of Austria had married the Spanish king's youngest sister, and he also thought he had a right to the throne that would so soon be empty.

But when the Spanish king died in 1700, it was found that he had made a will, leaving his kingdom to the Duke of Anjou, the grandson of Louis XIV.

The French king's heart had been set on wearing the crown of Spain himself. But he saw that his family and his country would reap the glory if his grandson ruled, so the Duke of Anjou was sent to Madrid to claim his inheritance.

But although Louis might be content, the princes of Europe were not. They had no wish to see Spain under the French king's control. William III., too, had cause for anger with Louis, who, instead of acknowledging his claims as he had promised to do, declared that the Pretender, the son of James II., was King of England.

So another Grand Alliance was formed against Louis XIV. by William and the princes of Europe. This was the beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession.

William III. died in 1702, while preparations for war against Louis were still going on. England kept true to the Grand Alliance, and sent the Duke of Marlborough with an army to carry on the war in Flanders.

Of all the great victories won by Marlborough you can read in your English history. Perhaps the most terrible battle in the long War of the Spanish Succession was Mal-

plaquet in 1709, when, although the French were defeated, they fought so bravely that more English than French were left slain upon the battlefield.

Twice Louis XIV. bent his pride to ask for peace, so terrible was the distress in France, caused by war and famine. But as each time the condition of the Allies was that his grandson should not be allowed to keep the Spanish throne, Louis determined to go on fighting.

From this time—1708—the fortune of war changed, and the French army gained many victories. Marlborough's enemies at once began to clamor for the return of the English general, and before long he was ordered home.

Still the war went on, until 1713, when the Peace of Utrecht at length brought it to an end, and Louis XIV. was forced to promise that no King of France should ever sit on the Spanish throne.

Two years before the Peace of Utrecht great trouble befell the French king. His son, the dauphin, died in 1711. Then his grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, became dauphin, but in the following year he, his wife and their eldest child, all died of fever. There was now left as heir to the throne only their younger son Louis, a delicate child of five years old.

Louis XIV. was nearly seventy-seven years old when these sorrows overtook him. The shock brought on an illness from which he knew that he would not recover.

His servants wept, seeing their master so ill, but Louis turning to them said, "Why do you weep; did you think I would live for ever?"

Sending then for his little great-grandson, he said, "My child, you are going to be a great king! Try to preserve peace with your neighbors. I have been too fond of war; do not imitate me in that, any more than in the too great expenses I have incurred. Try to relieve your people, which I have been so unfortunate as not to be able to do."

Thus, after a long reign of seventy-two years, Louis XIV. died.

CHAPTER LXVII

THE BREAD OF THE PEASANTS

THE wars of the last reign had cost so much money that the peasants of France were in terrible distress. They had little to eat, and what they had was only coarse barley or oaten bread.

So hungry had the people been during the reign of Louis XIV. that mobs of "starved skeletons" had gone out to Versailles and clamored at the palace gates for bread.

Once, in their desperate hunger, the people mobbed the carriage of Madame de Maintenon, for there were stories abroad that she hoarded grain and sold it at a high price. The people believed that while they starved, she was amassing a large fortune.

As for clothes, the peasants had not "a crown's worth on their back." Then, as now, the French countryman wore a cotton blouse, but in these hard times it was almost the only upper garment he could afford.

Louis XIV. being only five years old when his father died, the Duke of Orleans was chosen as regent.

The mother of the duke had a strange story to tell of her son when he was a little baby.

The fairies, she said, were invited to be present at his birth. Each gave to the little duke a gift—courage, good temper, strength, and many another kindly grace.

But one wicked fairy had not been invited to the birthday feast, which made her very angry.

However, uninvited though she was, she too came, leaning upon her stick, to see the baby-prince.

She could not take away the gifts the other fairies had given to the child, but she could spoil them, which indeed she did. For she decreed that he should never know how to use his birthday graces.

As the Duke of Orleans grew to be a man, it seemed as if this fairy-tale was true. For although the duke was both clever and strong, although he loved music and pictures, and was at the same time as gallant as a soldier may be, yet little by little he allowed his love of beauty to grow dim, his courage to grow faint. He spent his days and nights at feasts and revelries, and became always more lazy and unable to work.

To help him govern France, the new regent kept by his side Dubois, who had once been his tutor, and who became, through his old pupil's favor, a bishop, a cardinal, and at length Prime Minister of France.

Dubois was "a little lean man, with a light-colored wig and the look of a weasel." He had encouraged the bad habits of the duke, and was himself as wicked as his pupil. But he was too clever to neglect his work, and he soon showed that he could manage the affairs of the kingdom.

The minister knew that Philip v., King of Spain, hated the regent, and would be glad of any excuse to make war upon France. He determined, therefore, to win the support of England, Holland and Austria, and shortly after the death of Louis xiv. he had the joy of seeing these three countries join France in a Quadruple Alliance against Spain. Philip v. knew that it was useless to struggle against these combined powers, so after a short war he made peace.

The little king, Louis xv., was meanwhile being educated by Abbé Fleury, a good and wise man. When, in 1723, he was thirteen years old, the lad was considered of age; so a regent being no longer necessary, the Duke of Orleans resigned his post.

The king then made the Duke of Bourbon, a grandson of the Great Condé, his Prime Minister, but the duke was

lazy and wicked, and ruled entirely by his favorites, who were never of noble birth.

One of these favorites persuaded the Duke of Bourbon to break off the marriage which had been arranged between the king and the eldest daughter of the King of Spain. The infanta had already been sent to France to be brought up as the bride of Louis XV. But now she was rudely sent back to Spain, while the king was married to Maria, daughter of the exiled King of Poland.

Philip V. was naturally very indignant when his daughter was sent back to Spain, and it was plain that the foolish minister had done his best to provoke war between the two countries.

But when Bourbon added to his stupidity by increasing the already heavy taxes, he was dismissed from the court, with the consent of the king. Cardinal Fleury, Louis's old and honest tutor, then became Prime Minister.

The nation rejoiced, for Fleury was known to be both kind and just. But although he did all he could to help the people, the old man could not save France from the suffering which the selfishness of her kings had brought upon her.

In the time of Louis XIV., as I told you, the people had little or no money to buy food. In the time of Louis XV. the misery among the peasants increased. Many of them had now neither barley nor oaten bread to eat, but only grass.

One day the Duke of Orleans, touched by the wretchedness of the peasants, flung a loaf made of bracken upon the king's council-table, saying, "See, sire, this is what your subjects eat." To such a pitch had misery driven the people that, when the king drove through the streets of Paris, they crowded around the royal carriage, crying in their hunger, "Bread! Bread!"

Even the cold, careless nature of Louis XV. was moved, and when he got back to the palace he dismissed all his gardeners, saying that henceforth he would keep fewer

servants. But that did not give the hungry people food, while the poor gardeners were left to starve as did the peasants.

You will soon read more about these starving peasants, but now I will tell you about a brave woman who was the mother of one of the most unhappy Queens of France.

About this time—1740—Charles VI., the Emperor of Austria, died.

It had been agreed among the princes of the royal House of Austria that the emperor's daughter, Maria Theresa, should succeed her father. Maria Theresa was at this time only twenty-three years old, but beautiful and brave as a princess should be.

She needed all her courage too, for, in spite of their agreement, portions of the Austrian Empire were claimed by five different princes.

Silesia was seized by Frederick the Great, while France, eager to have a share in the great prize, sent an army into Austria. This was the beginning of the War of the Austrian Succession.

Before long Maria Theresa was forced to leave Vienna, on which town the French army was now advancing.

She fled to Hungary, and called upon the nobles of the country to meet her. When they had assembled, Maria Theresa came to them, dressed in black, carrying in her arms her little son, who was barely six months old.

Holding out the child to the nobles, the beautiful young queen cried, "I am abandoned by my friends, I am pursued by my enemies, attacked by my relatives, and I have no help but in your fidelity and courage. We, my son and I, look to you for our safety."

Almost before the queen had ceased speaking, the nobles had drawn their swords from their sheaths and flashed them above their heads, shouting as one man, "Let us die for our Queen, Maria Theresa!"

The beautiful queen thanked them through her tears, and withdrew with her little child.

Then the Hungarian nobles gathered together all their wild mountain followers, and with a great force fell upon the enemy, fighting so fiercely that the French army was nearly destroyed.

Fleury, the quiet old minister of France, who would fain have saved his country from war, was so distressed at the terrible defeat of the army that he grew ill and died in 1743, at the age of ninety.

The king was sorry to lose his old tutor, but being thirty-three years of age, he declared that he would now be his own Prime Minister.

Never was a king less fitted to rule than Louis XV. Yet for a little while he roused himself from his sluggish ways and joined his army, which had just been defeated by the English and Germans at Dettingen. George II. of England was present at this battle, for he had himself come to fight for Maria Theresa, whose empire, in spite of all her brave Hungarian nobles could do, was still insecure.

That their lazy, pleasure-loving king should show some interest in his soldiers, pleased the whole French nation. And when the people heard that he had visited the soldiers' hospital and tasted the soup and the bread which were made for the sick, their delight knew no bounds.

But before Louis had been long with his army, he fell seriously ill.

"The king's danger was noised abroad throughout Paris," writes a great man named Voltaire, "and everybody gets up, runs about in confusion, not knowing whither to go. The churches open at dead of night, nobody takes any more note of time, bed-time, or day-time, or meal-time. Paris was beside itself. The people cried, "If he should die, it will be for having marched to our aid." Prayers were offered in the churches, the priests weeping as they prayed, the people responding with nothing but sobs and cries."

It was on the 8th August 1744 that Louis was taken ill; by the 19th all danger was over.

The courier who brought the good news to Paris was "embraced and almost stifled by the people. They kissed his horse, they escorted him in triumph. All the streets resounded with a shout of joy."

Louis the Well-beloved, as the people now began to call their king, was told of the joy of his subjects.

"Ah, how sweet it is to be loved," said Louis. "What have I done to deserve it?" And that was a question which no one was able to answer.

CHAPTER LXVIII

THE TAKING OF QUEBEC

Louis xv. was still at the head of his army when the next great battle in the War of the Austrian Succession was fought. The dauphin also was there with his father.

On the eve of the battle the king was in good spirits, saying to those around him that it was a long time since a King of France had had his son with him on the battlefield, not, indeed, since the battle of Poitiers.

The commander of the French army was Marshal Saxe, who was ill, yet determined to fight even when he was unable to sit his horse. He was, indeed, drawn about in a carriage of osier-work during the latter part of the battle.

In was near the village of Fontenoy, in May 1745, that the French flung themselves in the path of the Dutch and English allies, determined that a battle should be fought.

Close to the village was a ravine held by the French, but which the English made up their mind should be theirs.

The Duke of Cumberland ordered his men to advance. Thirty or forty abreast, the English soldiers marched forward as steady as though they were on parade.

From right and left the French cannon played upon them, until whole rows of men fell to the ground. But their places were quickly filled, while steadily the English soldiers marched onward, dragging with them their guns.

At length the English reached the very centre of the French army, and Marshal Saxe began to fear that the king

and the dauphin were in danger. He begged them to withdraw from the battlefield, but Louis refused.

Then, urged on by the king himself, Marshal Saxe and the French guards made a determined attack on the solid ranks of the enemy, while their guns still played upon the whole length of the French column.

Had the English at that moment had a great general to direct them, the day might still have been theirs. As it was, after reaching the center of the French army they hesitated, not knowing what to do next, and before the renewed attack of Marshal Saxe they turned and fled. The French had won the battle of Fontenoy.

This victory so encouraged the French that they took town after town in Holland and Flanders, until the English and Dutch sued for peace.

So, in 1748, peace was signed at Aix-la-Chapelle. All the conquests that had been made during the war were given up, while Maria Theresa was recognized as Queen of Hungary.

After this Louis xv. went back to his palace at Versailles, where he shut himself up, away from his subjects, and as the years passed, saw them less and less.

It was now that he fell under the influence of a clever woman called Madame de Pompadour, who for twenty years ruled France.

The court ladies were indignant that Madame de Pompadour should have so much power. She was of humble birth, they were nobly born, and in their eyes it was more fitting that they should influence the king than this lowly favorite. But they did not dare to show their dislike to her.

The courtiers, too, were forced to be polite to Madame de Pompadour, for she had many gifts to give to those who pleased her. It is true that she often sold the offices of State to whoever offered the largest sum, yet any one who had offended her might be willing to pay the largest sum in vain.

While she ruled France the court lived more gayly every year, spending large sums of money on its amusements and luxuries. And all the while the nobles were feasting the people were starving.

Sometimes a lord more fearless than the others would brave Madame de Pompadour's anger, and try to rouse Louis XV. from his indolence by telling him how his people were suffering, and how his kingdom was being ruined by the extravagance of his favorite.

But the king had not enough energy even to resent such language. Listlessly he would answer, "It (meaning his kingdom) will last as long as I live; those who come after me may do the best they can."

After the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, France had no wars to add to her misery for eight years. Then, in 1756, the Seven Years' War began, in which England and Prussia fought against France and Austria.

Frederick II., King of Prussia, was a strong and resolute soldier, with whom the French officers, who had been idling their time at the court of Madame de Pompadour, were utterly unfit to cope.

At first, it is true, the French won two or three victories, but before long the Prussians, with only a small part of their army, completely defeated them at Rosbach.

Three years later they lost town after town, and at length in despair the French army fled from the enemy, and leaving eleven thousand soldiers behind as prisoners, succeeded in crossing the Rhine. Even then it could not escape the fury of the Prussians, who followed, and, overtaking the French at Crefeld, forced them to fight. Again they were defeated, and before 1758 they had lost all their possessions on the Rhine, both banks having been seized by the Germans.

One more great battle was fought at Minden, in August 1759, when six regiments of English soldiers marched straight at the center of the French army, which was ten thousand strong.

The French charged repeatedly, but the English still advanced, steadily, persistently, and actually put to flight the strong body of cavalry which formed the chief strength of the French army.

While these battles were being fought in Germany, the French were also fighting against the English in India and in Canada.

It is of the war in Canada that I wish to tell you now.

Canada at this time belonged to France, as did also a large tract of country called Louisiana. Unfortunately the British colonies were so placed that they could not add to their possessions without encroaching on French territory.

Accordingly the British looked sullenly at their neighbors' land, wishing to add it to their own. When they had an opportunity they took French ports, seized French ships, and did all they could to harass their neighbors, while the French longed to drive the British out of Canada altogether.

At last, in 1756, war broke out.

Pitt, who was Prime Minister in England, resolved to put an end to the French power, and sent a young officer called General Wolfe to Canada with an army of eight thousand men.

Wolfe had orders to take Quebec, the capital, for if Quebec fell the French would soon be driven out of the rest of their dominions.

The Canadians were already worn out by conflicts with the English, yet they rose as one man to defend their city.

Even old men and children of twelve years of age, who might have stayed at home without shame, came into the French camp and begged to be allowed to help.

Quebec was built on a high rock, and looked down upon the river St. Lawrence. The town was defended by the brave French general, Montcalm.

For a month, encouraged by their commander, Quebec

held out against the repeated assaults of the English. General Wolfe began to grow ill with anxiety lest he should be unable to take the town. He wrote home that he had only "a choice of difficulties left."

There was one path to the city which was carelessly guarded, the French thinking that no army would attempt to climb so steep and rough a road. Sometimes we read that this path was up the face of an apparently impassable cliff, but those who have seen it tell us that it was scarcely so formidable as that.

This difficult path was the one Wolfe chose by which to reach the city.

One dark night, when there was no moonlight to show what was going on, Wolfe ordered his soldiers to embark in boats that were already drawn up close to the bank of the St. Lawrence. Silently the men embarked, silently they were rowed across to the other side, the boats going backward and forward until the whole army stood beneath the town they had come to capture.

"Qui vive?" ("Who goes there?") cried a sentinel, as the soldiers landed. The British officers answered in such perfect French that the sentinel paid no more attention to the intruders, thinking they were a convoy with long-expected provisions.

On and up the steep pathway the English soldiers then began to scramble. At each step the way seemed steeper, yet with little foothold the men struggled on, getting ever a little nearer and a little nearer to the summit. Quietly as they moved, it was not possible to reach the top unnoticed.

All at once a sentinel, posted on the heights, caught the rustle of leaves, the fall of stones, and quick as lightning his voice rang out, *"Qui vive?"* and at the same moment a shot was fired down into the gloom.

But it was too late to hope to stop the English soldiers. On and up they swarmed, and when day broke the English

army was drawn up ready for battle on the Plains of Abraham, as the heights were called.

If General Montcalm was dismayed to see the position that his enemy had gained, he showed no fear. Fiercely and courageously he attacked the foe. General Wolfe was wounded, but he paid no attention save to wrap his handkerchief round his wrist, as he went on fighting.

Again he was struck, but still he fought on. A third ball hit him, and this time, sorely wounded, he fell to the ground.

General Wolfe was dying. His officers could do nothing to save him.

Suddenly one of them cried, "See, they run, they run!"

"Who run?" asked the dying soldier, raising himself with a great effort.

"The French, sir," answered the officer.

"Then I am content to die," murmured Wolfe as he fell back and breathed his last.

General Montcalm was also killed, and the town, left without a leader, surrendered.

Thus the French lost Quebec, and with Quebec Canada.

In England this victory caused great joy, but in France the people were dismayed, and it may be also ashamed that they had sent no help to their brave countrymen over the seas.

In 1763 the Seven Years' War came to an end, and a treaty was signed at Paris by which France had to give up to England nearly all that she had ever owned in Canada, as well as the towns she had conquered in India, retaining only a few trading-stations. The Peace of Paris showed plainly that the glory of war had departed from the French.

The year after this treaty Madame de Pompadour died. Calamity after calamity then overtook the king. In 1765 the dauphin died, leaving a little son of eleven years old heir to the throne. Soon after this the queen also died, and

for a time it seemed that Louis, sobered by his losses, meant to rouse himself from his selfish ways.

But he soon forgot his new resolutions, finding another favorite to take the place of Madame de Pompadour, and then allowing her to manage his kingdom while he enjoyed his selfish ease.

A few years later, in 1774, Louis XV. died of smallpox, not even mourned by those who had once named him "the Well-beloved."

"Kings owe no account of their conduct save to God alone," Louis XV. had been used to say to his courtiers. But it may be that beneath his breath he would sometimes add, "It is just He whom I fear."

During the reign of Louis XV. a great man named Voltaire lived and wrote. His books, as well as those of Rousseau, who followed him, molded the thoughts of the French people.

When Voltaire was a lad he was left a legacy on condition that the money should be spent on books. This was no hardship, but a joy to the boy, who even in those early days loved literature.

While he was still a youth he used to give little supper parties. "We are all princes or poets," he cried in sheer delight, as he looked round the table upon his friends. You may guess the kind of lad he was by the companions he had invited.

As he grew older Voltaire got into trouble through his writings. Seeing the indolence and folly of Louis XV., he said, among other bold things, that the country would be better without a king. For this he was sent to the Bastille, and afterwards exiled.

For three years Voltaire lived in England, the pen never dropping from his busy fingers. When he went back to France he gradually became the idol of the people.

In his old age he lived withdrawn from the noise and gayety of Paris, but when he was eighty-four years of age

he returned to the capital to receive the homage of the people. He had always dearly loved their homage, and now it was lavished on the tottering old man to his heart's content. He was fêted, he was taken to the theater, where one of his own plays was performed. When Voltaire appeared in his box, the whole house rose with shouts of welcome, while a garland was placed on his head by the chief actor. He tried to resist the honor in vain, then, seeing himself crowned, he wept tears of joy.

When all was over he got into his carriage to go home. But the people, in their wild enthusiasm, "threw themselves upon the horses and kissed them," while one or two youthful poets tried to unyoke the animals that they might draw the carriage themselves. In this they were unsuccessful, and the old man was allowed to drive away, followed by the loud hurrahs of the people.

Two months later, in May 1778, Voltaire was dead.

In the reign of Louis XVI. you will see in what a terrible way the people fought to gain the liberty of which Voltaire had written in many of his books.

CHAPTER LXIX

MARIE ANTOINETTE

"O God, protect us, direct us, we are too young to reign," cried the young king, Louis XVI., falling upon his knees, his beautiful girl-wife by his side. He had just been told that his grandfather, Louis XV., was dead, and he, the new king, was only twenty years old, his wife, Marie Antoinette, a year younger.

The young monarch was anxious to rule well, and so he called to his side a man who he believed could help him. This was Count de Maurepas, who was seventy years old.

Twenty-five years before the count had been sent away from the court by Madame de Pompadour. During these years he had studied the writings of great men, but he had not learned the secret of their wisdom.

The count believed, however, that all men, rich and poor, were equal, and that the rich had no right to oppress the poor. He made Turgot, a man who wished to put into practice the new ideas he had learned from Voltaire and Rousseau, Minister of Finance.

But though the young king wished to rule well, he was weak and easily led. Thus it was that he changed his ministers so often that they had no time to carry out the reforms which they had planned.

As the years passed, it seemed to Louis XVI. a hopeless task to try to improve the condition of his people. Little by little his interest in them passed away, and he showed no care for anything, save to hunt and to work at a forge which he had had set up in the palace.

As a boy Louis was awkward but intelligent; when he became a man he grew fat and dull, and showed little concern even when calamity after calamity overtook him.

The king's wife, Marie Antoinette, was the daughter of the brave Queen of Hungary, Maria Theresa. She had inherited her mother's pride and obstinate nature, but she was, in these early days, what Maria Theresa had never been —foolish, vain, and extravagant.

Marie Antoinette had been married when she was only fifteen years old. She had come to France a merry, happy girl, ready for fun and frolic wherever they were to be found.

From the beginning she disliked the formal ways of the French court. When she became queen on the death of Louis XV., the older court ladies hastened to congratulate her. The girl-queen was amused at the strange, stiff manners of these dames, no less than at what seemed to her their old-fashioned garments and odd head-gears, and she made no effort to hide her amusement.

Forgetful of the respect due to those who were older than herself, as well as of her queenly dignity, Marie Antoinette almost laughed in the faces of the astonished ladies. And they never forgave her for the lack of courtesy with which she treated them.

Moreover, the queen had no wish to attend the long and stately banquets given by these ladies of noble birth, and so she went her own willful, girlish way. She chose her favorites where she willed, she dressed as she liked, not as the etiquette of the court demanded, and she gave banquets and fêtes which were happy and informal, but which cost a great deal of money.

While the young queen spent her days in merry frolics and her evenings at balls or at theaters and dainty supper parties, the people of France were still starving, as they had done in former reigns. Only now they were less inclined to bear their misery in silence.

In their hunger and distress the Parisians accused the

young queen of many things which she never did, for although she was thoughtless, which was wrong and was the cause of much trouble in France, she was not deliberately unkind.

But the people were quite sure that the queen used public money for her balls and fêtes. They even accused her of sending French money to her relatives in Austria, although she knew that the Austrians were hated by the French nation. She had persuaded the king, too, to spend large sums on a diamond necklace which she greatly coveted, so said the angry, famine-stricken people.

The king was devoted to Marie Antoinette, but the people of France were indignant on his behalf, believing that the queen cared little for him.

It is true that his wife showed slight interest in her husband's amusements.

Louis XVI. loved to hunt or to work at his forge more than anything else. He would spend long days at the chase or long hours over his forge, making locks and keys, and then, tired out, would go to bed and sleep soundly, while Marie Antoinette, paying little heed to her husband's ways, continued to play cards, to go to theaters and to masked balls.

Sometimes, in the evening, Louis would come into the queen's brightly lit apartments, but, tired with his day's hunting, he would not try to make himself pleasant to Marie Antoinette or her gay friends. Unaccustomed, too, to such society, he would soon withdraw to a window and stand there, carelessly tapping the panes with his fingers, until the queen would reprove him sharply for his unkingly ways.

The king was really loved by his people, but toward the queen the feeling of dislike was changing into an ever-increasing hatred.

As you know, the Parisian mob was always ready with nicknames, so now, because Marie Antoinette feasted while they had no food, they called her the "Baker's Wife." And

because she belonged to Austria, a country they hated, the mob would also scornfully name her the "Austrian." Money was scarce, and for the deficiency or want of money the poor queen was blamed, while in mockery they gave her yet another name, calling her "Madame Deficit."

Thus the people let themselves grow careless of the dignity of their royal family. And the insolent crowd would wander about the streets shouting such foolish rimes as this:

"My little queen, not twenty-one
Maltreat the folks as you've begun,
And o'er the border you shall run."

The day, alas, was not far off when Marie Antoinette would have been glad had she been free to cross the frontiers of France.

Yet for all her foolish, wayward ways the queen had, as I told you, a kind heart. When, in 1773, the people were perishing from cold, the king sent sledges to them filled with logs, and the queen gladly helped him in his charities.

But her kindness and, as troubles thickened, her thoughtfulness for others, could not soften the hearts of the people. Always she seemed to them to be the cause of their misery, and their hatred followed her even to her death.

Turgot, as I told you, was made Minister of Finance at the beginning of the reign of Louis XVI., and at first the king did all he could to support his minister.

The minister needed support, for before long he brought on his head the anger of the queen, the nobles, and the people.

Marie Antoinette's anger was easy to understand, for the Minister of Finance cut down the expenses of the royal household, and she could no longer spend as much as she pleased on balls and fêtes.

The dislike of the nobles was as easily explained, because after Turgot began to take charge of the finances, their salaries were reduced, and some of their useless offices were swept away altogether.

As for the people, they hated Turgot because he had always some new scheme on hand by which he hoped to make them better citizens, and they grew tired of his reforms, wishing only to be left alone to live as they pleased.

But the minister's greatest enemy was the Parliament of Paris, which Louis XV. had banished, but which Louis XVI. now in 1774 recalled.

Again and again this Parliament refused to sign the reforms which Turgot had at heart.

Once the king was present, listening to the members as they fought against Turgot's wish that the taxes should be more equally divided, and that the nobles should bear their proper share.

Suddenly the king's voice startled lawyers and courtiers alike.

"Come," said Louis, "I see there are only Monsieur Turgot and I who love the people," and without another word the king himself signed the new measure the minister had laid before the Parliament of Paris.

When the nobles came with tales about Turgot, trying to make Louis distrust his minister, he still stood by him.

"People may say what they like," said the king with unusual earnestness, "but he is an honest man."

Little by little the queen's dislike of the minister who had spoiled her fêtes, and the jealousy of the nobles, began to tell upon the king. Perhaps, too, he was growing tired of Turgot's never-ending reforms.

However that may be, in 1776 Turgot was dismissed, and in spite of all that the minister had tried to do, the peasants in the country, and the poor folk in Paris, were still starving.

The new Minister of Finance was a banker named Necker. At first he was more successful than Turgot had been, and he even made the taxes less heavy.

But war broke out in 1778 between North America and England, and when France determined to send help to the

Americans, Necker found it almost impossible to provide money to raise a French fleet and send an army to help his country's allies. He was therefore dismissed.

But in 1789 the people demanded that Necker should be recalled. As there was now no money in the Treasury, the minister persuaded Louis to call together the States-General to discuss the situation.

Now in the States-General there were nobles and priests. But there was also a Third Estate, as it was called, which was composed of the deputies of the people, and the deputies of the people numbered many more than the nobles and priests added together.

The winter before the States-General met was a terrible one. There was no bread to be had, and famine stared the country in the face.

Louis and Marie Antoinette did what they could to help the poor of Paris, and for a little while the hatred against the queen was forgotten.

For months before, the queen had scarcely been able to go into Paris. Angry looks had followed her, if she dared to drive through the streets, while if she ventured into a theater she was hissed. The head of the policemen had even warned her that he might not be able to save her from the sudden violence of the mob.

Now hatred was for a little while destroyed by gratitude, for the queen had helped to feed the starving mob.

It was winter, and the snow lay thick on the streets. The fickle people rolled the snow into huge balls, and then shaped the balls into images of the king and queen. They even sang verses in praise of Marie Antoinette, and when she ventured to the theater they cheered her lustily.

Yet the queen was not happy. A foreboding of evil hung over her. She knew that the meeting of the States-General was no good omen, that it threatened, indeed, the power of her husband the king.

CHAPTER LXX

THE TAKING OF THE BASTILLE

In May 1789 the States-General met at Versailles, and the king appeared before it "with simple dignity, without pride, without timidity, wearing on his features the impress of the goodness which he had in his heart."

But although the States-General had met, for weeks it was impossible to do anything, for the nobles and clergy were thwarted in all they wished to do by the deputies of the people, called the Third Estate. The deputies had come to Versailles determined that their voice should be heard and obeyed.

In the midst of the trouble caused by the Third Estate the dauphin died, and for a little while the king and queen forgot the strife of nobles and deputies alike, while they grieved for the loss of their first-born son.

Even in his grief the king could not escape from the cares of his kingdom. The Third Estate sent demanding to see him, before his child was buried. Louis sobbed as he asked, "Are there no fathers among these rough men, that I may not be left alone at such a time?"

Among the deputies of the people was Mirabeau, a noble who had flung aside his title that he might sit with the commons and help the cause of the people.

Mirabeau was a great orator, that is, he had the gift of speech, so that when he spoke he swayed people this way or that as he wished.

It pleased him now to persuade the Third Estate to openly split up the States-General by giving itself a new name.

Henceforth the deputies of the people should be called the National Assembly, and without their consent the nobles and clergy of the States-General should be unable to pass any measure. On the day of its birth the National Assembly was joined by more than a hundred of the clergy.

When Louis XVI. and his nobles heard of the new title which the Third Estate had adopted, they were startled. The National Assembly had an ominous sound to their ears. The deputies, led by Mirabeau, were growing too bold. It was time that they were taught a lesson. So the king ordered that the great hall in which the Third Estate had met should be closed, and none of the members allowed to enter.

Although the deputies had heard the king's order, they went at the usual time to the hall, not quite believing that they had been turned out.

The first thing they saw was carpenters at work putting up a platform, and the deputies were told that no one save the president and secretaries could be admitted, and they only to take away their papers.

As it happened, it was a cold damp morning, and the new National Assembly wandered about, getting ever more wet and more angry.

Courtiers looking out of the palace windows laughed as they watched the dejected deputies walking aimlessly hither and thither in the rain.

At length their president, aided by a Dr. Guillotine, whose name was soon to become famous, found in a forsaken tennis-court of Old Versailles an empty, unfurnished building. To this rough shelter the National Assembly hastened out of the cold and wet.

Here the deputies took an oath, known as the "Oath of the Tennis-Court," by which they declared that they would never separate until they had done the work the people had sent them to do. This work was to reform the government of France.

A great crowd of people had followed the banished deputies to the tennis-court, and as they took the oath the cheers of the multitude rang out upon the chilly air.

The National Assembly was loyal in its attitude, for they did not believe it was Louis, but his foolish advisers, who had turned them out. So now, in their enthusiasm, they shouted, "Long live the king!" while the people answering, cried, "Long live the king!"

A few days later Louis himself went to meet the National Assembly. Among the members there were now a few nobles as well as clergy. These were led by the Duke of Orleans, who treacherously hoped to be raised to the post of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, and wrench all power from the hands of Louis XVI.

Near Mirabeau, whose harsh and ugly face wore a look of strength, sat the Marquis de La Fayette, who had fought but lately in the American War, and who had much to do in the struggle that had now begun between the king and his people. There sat also a small man, with smiling, unpleasant face, whose very name before long filled all who heard it with dismay. This was Robespierre.

When the king visited the Assembly, which so lately he had turned out into the rain, he found himself forced to grant all its demands. Having done so, however, he ordered the members to go home and never to meet again as the National Assembly.

At Louis's words the nobles cheered, but not a sound came from the deputies, and when the king and his nobles left the hall, the Third Estate did not move.

Soon a messenger from Louis arrived, and seeing the Assembly still seated, said sharply, "You heard the king's orders?"

Then Mirabeau, the orator with the ugly face which yet had power written on every line of it, jumped to his feet, and his voice rang clear and stern as he answered, "Go, tell those who sent you that we are here by the will of the

people, and that we will only be driven out at the point of the bayonet."

The king's messenger hastily withdrew, and the National Assembly continued to meet, clergy and nobles from the States-General joining them at different times.

Louis XVI. was not strong enough to oppose so resolute an assembly long, and in June 1789 the three orders were, with his consent, united as one body.

Paris went wild with excitement. At Versailles men ran about in the dark with torches, shouting and cheering the king, the queen, and the dauphin. The people were sure that at last their troubles were over, and that soon there would be bread enough and to spare.

But the people rejoiced too soon. The queen, as well as many of the nobles and clergy, hated the deputies, and they soon convinced the king that he had been foolish to yield to their demands.

If he wished to keep any power at all he must use force, said Marie Antoinette, and Louis, weaker now than in the early days of his reign, yielded to the queen's advice. Soldiers were sent to seize Paris.

The Parisians could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw the soldiers. Still less could they believe that they had heard aright when it was whispered that the king meant to take no notice of the National Assembly, that he meant to rule himself, with the help of the nobles.

The nobles were, as you know, hated by the people, and among them all none was more hated than Foulon, who, when he was told that the people were hungry, brutally said, "Let them eat grass."

Was it any wonder that the people were on fire with anger at the thought of being ruled by Foulon and such as he?

"To arms! to arms!" they shouted, and rushing to the Town Hall they speedily found for themselves pikes and muskets. Then, tearing up the pavements, they barricaded the city against the king's troops, and paraded the streets

wearing ribbons of red, white and blue, which the women were hurriedly sewing into cockades.

These colors soon became known as the Tricolor, the emblem of the French Republic.

News traveled quickly to Versailles. The king heard that the Parisians had flown to arms, but knowing that his troops were not to be trusted, he sent no orders to disperse the mob. Many, indeed, of the royal troops had joined the people.

On July 14, 1789, as soon as day dawned, the mob, which had wandered restlessly through the streets all night, set out for the Bastille, the chief fortress and prison of Paris.

The Bastille seemed to the excited people a visible sign of the king's power. They made up their minds to destroy it.

"To the Bastille! to the Bastille!" The cry grew, until at length thousands of armed men were on their way to the grim old fortress.

The Governor of the Bastille was brave but old, and not quite sure what to do against such a fierce and armed force.

After some hesitation he ordered the cannon to be turned upon them, but this only added to the fury of the crowd.

Then the governor, changing his mind, ordered the cannon to cease firing, and foolishly opened the great gates of the Bastille, hoping to treat with the leaders of the mob.

But the crowd saw its opportunity, and rushing in at the gates began to destroy the huge building. In a short time it was in ruins.

The governor and his officers were ruthlessly murdered, and then the mob, mad with excitement, placed the heads of the hapless men on pikes, and carried them in triumph through the streets.

At Versailles nothing was known of what was being done at Paris. Only when all was over a noble rushed into the king's apartments and told him the terrible events of the day.

"Why, that is a revolt," said the bewildered king.

"Sire," answered the courtier, "it is a revolution."

CHAPTER LXXI

THE FISHWIVES AT VERSAILLES

The National Assembly meanwhile had sent to the king, begging him to recall his troops and to dismiss the nobles who had advised him to send them to Paris.

Louis XVI., knowing that his army could not be trusted, was helpless, so he made up his mind to go to the Assembly to try to regain its confidence.

When Mirabeau heard that the king was coming, he bade the Assembly receive him in silence. But when Louis arrived, guarded only by his two brothers, and promised to recall the troops and to help the deputies to restore peace, the whole Assembly rose to its feet to cheer their king.

And it did more than cheer. When Louis left the hall, the Assembly accompanied its sovereign. Putting him in their midst, the deputies then joined their hands to form a guard, so that the people might not jostle him.

When they reached the palace, the queen came out on the balcony with the little dauphin and his sister. Then happy cries filled the air as the people shouted, "Long live the king! long live the queen!" For once again the people were sure that all was well.

The Parisians, hearing that the king had gone to the Assembly, demanded that he should also come to his capital.

So Louis, not sure that he would ever be allowed to return to Versailles, took the sacrament and set out for Paris.

Without a military guard, escorted only by about a hundred members of the Assembly, the king reached the city

gates. Here the keys were brought to him, after which he rode on to the Town Hall, where a great crowd of armed men bade him welcome.

Louis was then constrained to listen to the chief orators of the Assembly until they had tired themselves out, after which, pinning a Tricolor cockade in the king's hat, they led him out on the balcony that the crowds might see that he was one of themselves.

Again the shouts of the people rang out, as they cried, "Long live the king! long live the nation!"

Louis's subjects were now content, and the king was free to go back to Versailles, where the queen welcomed him as one returned from the dead.

But although the mob cheered the king, it still cherished its anger against the nobles.

Foulon, the minister who had bade them eat grass if they were hungry, who had dared to raise the price of bread in the face of their misery, was alive. The very thought incensed the people.

One day they succeeded in capturing the old man, who was seventy-four years of age. Tying a bundle of grass on his back and a bundle of nettles round his neck, the mob dragged him with ropes to the Town Hall.

He must be judged. Yes, if the mob would but be patient. But it would listen to no one, not even to Bailly, the mayor of the city.

Heedless of the old man's cries, the rabble pushed Foulon impatiently out of the Town Hall, across the street to the nearest lamp or lantern, and there it hanged the man who had mocked at its hunger.

Still the people felt their vengeance was incomplete, so they fixed Foulon's head on a pike, first stuffing his mouth with grass, and carried it through the streets of Paris. Had the noble not bidden them eat grass?

From that day the cry *"à la lanterne"* ("to the lantern") was no strange sound in the streets of Paris.

After Foulon's death, Charles, the brother of the king, as well as many of the nobles, felt that their lives were not safe in France, and they escaped to other lands.

It was selfish to leave their king, but it was treachery to sell their country as they tried to do when they went to foreign courts. For the French nobles begged the princes of Europe to send armies into France to conquer it, and to restore to them rank and riches.

The queen, too, was forsaken by her favorites. It is true that she bade them go where they would be safe, yet she had hoped that they would not all desert her. It is true that some of the nobles had begged her to leave France, but Marie Antoinette had too much of the pride and obstinacy of her mother to desert a difficult post. She determined to stay with the king.

It was not only in Paris that the people began to wreak their anger on the nobles. In the country the peasants rose against their lords, so that they were forced to fly from their castles and their palaces.

The National Assembly encouraged the rebellion of the people, for in August of this fateful year, 1789, it made a new law, by which all the rights of the nobles as well as their titles were taken away. There were no longer to be princes, dukes, marquises; henceforth every one was to be addressed as "citizen" or "citizeness."

Louis XVI., having now no soldiers and not too much courage, was forced to sign the new constitution or form of government planned by the National Assembly. In reality he lost the last trace of his kingly power thereby, placing it in the hands of the deputies of the people.

Soon after this a regiment was ordered to relieve the guards at Versailles. A great banquet was given by the guards to welcome the officers of the new regiment.

The king and queen went to the feast to show their pleasure at the arrival of the regiment. They were greeted with cheers, while the officers, being young and thoughtless,

began to sing a well-known national song, "O Richard, O my king, all the world deserteth thee."

Then, tearing the Tricolors from their hats, they flung them down, trampled upon them, and in their place put the white cockade, the emblem of the Bourbons.

When the people of Paris heard of the banquet and of the trampled Tricolors, they were roused to fury, which partly at least was due to their desperate hunger.

The king and the queen could feast, but they must starve or wait for hours outside a baker's shop, a long line of hungry folk, waiting to buy a loaf, if perchance their turn should come before the day was ended.

Starving women determined to go to Versailles. A banquet of bread, that they must have ere they would be content.

So, early in October, thousands of hungry women, many of them fishwives of the roughest manners, met together. Armed with tongs, brooms, rusty pistols, anything indeed that they could find, they set off for Versailles. "Bread! Bread!" they shouted as they marched along.

Having reached Versailles these hungry women broke into the hall of the National Assembly, crying, "Bread! Bread!" and demanding to be taken to the king.

After some delay five women were chosen and actually taken into the presence of Louis XVI., who received them graciously, and sent them away promising that bread should be sent into Paris.

The five women came back to the crowd, pleased to have seen the king, content with his gracious promises. But the others, cold and wet, weary, too, with long waiting, mocked at "mere words." They must have the king's promise in writing.

La Fayette, Captain of the National Guard, now arrived at Versailles with his troops, followed by a great crowd of idle cruel men. The National Guard, as well as the mob, encamped for the night in the open squares and avenues of the town.

La Fayette believed he had guarded all the entrances to the palace, but he had left one door unwatched, and early in the morning some of the mob found it out and tried to enter the palace.

The soldiers inside the palace tried to push them back, and when they persisted, one of them fired among the crowd.

In a frenzy of rage the people then poured into the palace, heedless of the royal guard. Up the great staircases they ran, reaching at length the door of the queen's own bedroom.

Here the Swiss Guards held them back, while Marie Antoinette escaped by a secret passage to the king's apartments.

A moment later, killing two of the Swiss Guards, they forced their way into the queen's room, only to find it empty. In their anger they thrust their pikes into the bed from which the queen had but just fled.

Before more mischief was done, La Fayette arrived with his National Guard. He speedily cleared the mob out of the palace, and then persuaded the king to go out on the balcony that the people might see him.

"Long live the king!" cried some, as they looked at Louis XVI., more kingly in the time of danger than ever he had been before. But others shouted fiercely, "The king to Paris! the king to Paris!"

Louis bowed his head to show that he was willing to go to the capital, and at that sign the cheering was redoubled.

Urged by La Fayette, the queen also stepped out on the balcony, holding her little son by the hand.

"No children," yelled the mob, and Marie Antoinette obediently put the child behind her, and stood there, quiet and proud, facing the crowd who hated her. If she knew that there was danger, she showed no sign of fear.

Seeing her courage, La Fayette knelt to kiss her hand, and the people, moved, it may be, by her beauty or her bravery, shouted, "Long live the queen!"

The officers, who had so lately boasted of their loyalty

and trampled the Tricolor under their feet, had been unable to do anything to help their king. If they had moved, their own soldiers, who had deserted to the National Guard, would have killed them.

Meanwhile the mob never ceased to shout, "The king to Paris! the king to Paris!" So the royal carriages were ordered, and at length Louis, Marie Antoinette, and their children set out for the capital, La Fayette riding close to the royal coach, which could move but slowly through the dense crowd that surrounded it.

The fishwives, too, formed part of the procession, all fear of starving forgotten. They were bringing the king with them, and now he would allow no minister to raise the price of bread.

So, marching gayly behind the royal coach, the women cried in their rough and ready way, "We shall not starve any longer. We have got the Baker, the Baker's wife, and the Baker's little boy with us." They meant, as you know, the king, the queen, and the little dauphin.

Paris was reached at last. The king and queen were taken to the Town Hall, where, weary as they were, they were forced to listen to long and tedious speeches. When they were ended, the king gravely declared "that he came with pleasure and with confidence among his people."

Then the king and queen went out in the torchlight and stood on the balcony, the king wearing no longer the Lilies of France, but the Tricolor. Once again the people appeared to be content.

As the long day drew to a close, the royal family was conducted to the Tuileries, which had long been unused, nor did the hurried preparations that had been made to receive the king hide its gloom.

Even the little dauphin, child as he was, felt the terror of its forlorn and empty look, and clung to his mother, crying, "Everything is ugly here."

"Louis XIV. lodged here, my son, and was content," answered the queen. "We must not be more exacting than he."

CHAPTER LXXII

THE FLIGHT OF THE ROYAL FAMILY

THE royal family soon found that the palace was in reality a prison.

Louis XVI. could not leave the gates of the Tuileries without being followed by a number of the National Guards. The same soldiers escorted him if he went to hunt, the chase during these dark days being his chief solace.

Many of the nobles had, you remember, deserted the king, and were now doing all they could to encourage foreign princes to invade France.

Rumors of armies that would overrun their country reached the ears of the French people, and made the nobles, or aristocrats as they were now called, more hated than ever.

Unfortunately the people believed not only that the king and queen were eager to see the foreign soldiers in France, but that they were actually in league with the aristocrats abroad. Thus the mob became ever more surly and suspicious.

In July 1790, as though to allay suspicion, Louis XVI. sent to the Assembly to say that he would visit it and pledge himself to support the new form of government which it had drawn up.

So on the 14th July, exactly a year after the Bastille had been raised to the ground, a great meeting was held in the Champ de Mars.

The Champ de Mars, which means the Field of the War God, was a large open space in Paris, on the left bank of the Seine.

Here the Assembly, the National Guards, and a great number of people gathered, to hear the king take a solemn oath to be true to the New Constitution.

Marie Antoinette and her little son were also present. As the Assembly in its turn swore to be faithful to Louis XVI., the queen lifted the dauphin in her arms that all might see him and know that he, too, shared in the promises made by the Assembly to their king.

It was a day of great rejoicing, and when the royal family had gone back to the palace, the people stayed to dance upon the spot where, but a year before, that grim fortress, the Bastille, had stood.

The troubles of France were certainly drawing to a close, thought the people. But they did not know the bitterness that was in the heart of the king, the anger that was in the heart of the queen, because they had been forced to yield so many of their royal rights.

Until now Mirabeau had been the real head of the Assembly. Again and again his eloquence had restrained the more violent of the deputies. He was trusted both by the Republicans, as the fiercer reformers were called, and by the court.

He had an interview with the queen after the meeting at the Champ de Mars, and, touched by her beauty and her sadness, he had forgotten that he was not a marquis, and bending low he had kissed her hand, saying, "Madame, the monarchy is saved." And this rugged man, with his iron will and power of speech, might have been able, had he lived, to save the king, but early in 1791 Mirabeau died.

After the death of the great orator the National Assembly was dissolved. New deputies were chosen by the people and called the Legislative Assembly. In it sat Robespierre, Danton and Marat, three of the most violent Republicans in France. They, with others who shared their opinions, belonged to a club called the Club of the Jacobins, and were

known as Red Republicans. Now that Mirabeau no longer lived to control the king's enemies, Louis felt that even his life was in danger, that there was safety only in flight.

So Louis XVI. and his queen determined to leave the country. Across the frontier an army awaited them, led by French nobles who had already fled from France.

At midnight, on June 20, 1791, the royal family set out from Paris. The little dauphin was disguised in his sister's clothes, but this was the only precaution taken to escape discovery.

Louis XVI., well-meaning but often foolish, instead of driving quietly away in an ordinary coach, insisted on traveling in a new coach. He also ordered his couriers and bodyguard to wear their yellow liveries.

In spite of this the little company got safely out of the city. As they journeyed along as quickly as they dared, one of the horses' traces broke, and a whole hour was wasted before it was repaired.

On and on drove the fugitives. Each mile as it passed left the king more cheerful. He even ventured at last to put his head out of the window. Alas, although they did not suspect it, they had been recognized and were being followed.

But now that they were so near the French frontier no harm, they thought, could overtake them. Soon they would reach the troops and loyal servants who were waiting impatiently to welcome the hapless king.

At length the royal party reached a village called Varennes, close to the frontier. Here they expected fresh horses, which were actually ready on the farther bank of the river. But the yellow-liveried courier who had gone on before to find them, never dreamed of crossing the bridge to look for the horses. He reported to Louis that there were none to be found anywhere.

Drouet, for this was the name of the man who had pursued the fugitives, now also reached Varennes.

While the king tried in vain to make the sleepy postillions drive their horses one stage farther, Drouet alarmed the village, blocked and guarded the bridge.

Thus it was that when the postillions, urged by bribes and also by threats, drove sullenly on, it was too late. The bridge could no longer be crossed.

There, awaiting the travelers, was Drouet with the Mayor of Varennes, who demanded the travelers' passports. They must be examined before the coach could proceed.

The royal party not being allowed to go on, was forced to spend the night in the mayor's house. This delay was fatal. In the morning the troops sent by the Assembly reached the village, their officer carrying with him an order to arrest the royal fugitives.

As the warrant was handed to Louis XVI., he read it and said sadly, "There is no longer any King of France."

Soon the long journey back to Paris was begun. It was made bitter by the jeers and insults of those who thronged the road to see their captured king.

When at length the royal party was again in Paris they were taken back to the Tuileries, where both Louis and Marie Antoinette were now closely guarded. Sentinels were posted in the palace, and even in the bedrooms of the king and queen soldiers kept watch.

The princes of Europe heard of Louis's captivity with anger, and the King of Austria, with other sovereigns, demanded that he should be set free.

But the Red Republicans were in no mood to listen to princes. Their answer was to send three armies to the frontiers, lest the King of Austria with other princes should invade France and restore Louis to freedom.

Louis himself was forced to agree that the armies should be sent, but when the Assembly demanded that he should declare that all the emigrant nobles were traitors, he absolutely refused to do as they wished.

The mob heard of the king's brave refusal, for brave it

was, yet it felt no admiration for his courage, but only anger because he had dared to defy the Assembly.

Again the people rose, as they had done when they marched to Versailles, and forced their way into the Tuileries, even into the room where Louis XVI. himself stood with his guards and a few friends.

Finding themselves in the presence of their king, the rough men shrank back for a moment abashed. Then, pressed forward by those behind, they took courage and shouted that Louis should do as the Assembly wished and denounce the nobles as traitors.

Brave and steadfast the king answered, "This is not the time and place to do as you desire."

His courage awed the mob, and one of the men handed him a red cap, the symbol of liberty, and Louis put it on his head. The queen also was offered a red cap, which she put on the head of the little dauphin.

Seeing this the leader of the mob was touched, and said, "Madame, this people loves you more than you think."

It was four o'clock in the afternoon when the mob entered the Tuileries; it was eight in the evening before the palace was free from its unwelcome guests.

CHAPTER LXXIII

LOUIS XVI. IS EXECUTED

For about two months quiet reigned at the palace of the Tuileries. Then the suspicions of the people were again aroused.

Austrians, Germans, Prussians were approaching the frontiers of France, and it was rumored that Louis and the queen were in secret communication with the Austrians.

The mere rumor was enough to disturb the Jacobins, who were the fiercest Republicans. They made up their minds that they must get rid of the king, that their country might be at peace.

It was determined to attack the Tuileries on August 10, 1792. This time the Jacobins resolved that the attack should not be left to the mob, for the Swiss Guard, who were devoted to the king and who were now guarding the palace, would soon scatter it.

So the Jacobins sent to Marseilles for soldiers who were known to stand the fiercest fire. In July 1792 the Marseillais set out on their march to Paris, and as they marched they sang a battle-song. Those who heard it could never forget its martial strains, and they called it after the soldiers who sang, "The Marseillaise." The Marseillaise became the battle-song of the Revolution.

When the famous regiment reached Paris, the people rose, and on the 10th August followed it to the Tuileries, bringing with them cannon.

The Assembly was sitting when the attack began, but it had lost all power over the mob. Still it was necessary

to get the king to a place of safety, lest the rabble should break into the palace.

At first Louis refused to believe there was danger, but as the shouts of the mob drew nearer and nearer, he consented to go with the queen and his children to take refuge with the members of the Assembly.

As he crossed the palace grounds—the dauphin, unconscious of danger, amusing himself by idly kicking a few fallen leaves—Louis could hear more clearly still the fierce cries of the Marseillais, the roar of cannon, the terrified screams of the mob.

Boldly the Swiss Guards defended the palace, not knowing that their king had left, nor, until an order reached them from Louis himself, did their firing cease.

Then, faithful to the end, although unable by their king's command to defend themselves, they were slaughtered at their post.

Thus the Tuileries was soon in the hands of the rebels, who roamed from room to room, plundering and destroying all that they touched.

Paris now belonged to the Jacobins. Without delay they declared that the king was no longer king, and he and his family were taken to a gloomy prison called the Temple. Here they were guarded day and night, nor were they allowed to leave their prison, save to walk in a small strip of garden that belonged to it.

Danton, one of the Jacobins, now determined that all the aristocrats who were left in France should be imprisoned or put to death.

The city gates were shut that none might escape, and all who were believed to favor the king were thrown into gaol.

A few weeks later the armies of Prussia and Austria crossed the frontiers of France. Paris was at once stricken with sudden panic, and hoisted a black flag on all the public buildings.

Then the Jacobins ordered the bells to be rung to assemble

the people, that they might listen to their chosen leader, Danton.

He in his zeal warned the citizens that when they left the city to fight the foreign foe that had invaded their land, the Royalists who were now in prison would break loose. They were said to be armed, and if that were so, what would happen to those who were left at home—to mothers, wives, children?

It was enough. Danton had no need to say more. A Committee of General Safety was formed by the Jacobins, and a terrible time known as the September Massacres now began.

A band of cruel men paid by the Jacobins went from prison to prison. After a hasty trial, which was after all only a sham one, the prisoners were led out to the door of their prison.

There the band of ruffians, with pikes in their hands, fell upon the defenseless folk and cruelly murdered them. None were spared, neither the old nor the young, the strong nor the weak.

A beautiful duchess, known to be the friend of Marie Antoinette, was told to leave her cell. She begged for time to arrange her dress, but not a moment was she granted. Rough voices shouted to her, "You have not far to go."

She was asked if she would swear to hate the king and queen, but loyally she answered that this she could not do. "It is not in my heart," she said.

At once she was led to the prison door, cruel hands stretched out to seize her, and she was stabbed to death. Her head, fixed on a pike, was carried beneath the windows of the Temple, in the hope, perchance, that the poor queen might learn what had befallen her friend.

For four long days these dreadful deeds were done, and not only in Paris. All over France the peasants rose against the hated aristocrats, who for years had trampled them beneath their feet. Castles were burned, pleasure-grounds destroyed, aristocrats themselves put to death.

Moreover, in many towns an instrument called the guillotine was erected. Dr. Guillotine, a member of the Assembly, had suggested that this instrument should be used, and it was from him that it received its name, although he did not invent it. Death by it was quick, and therefore merciful.

In September there was again a new Assembly. Its first act was to declare that France was a republic, that royalty was abolished.

It was determined by the new Assembly, or Convention as it was called, that Louis should be brought to trial, though Danton and Marat would gladly have put him to death at once.

When he was brought before his judges Louis was brave and quiet. He denied the charges brought against him, and his advocates defended him zealously, but in vain.

Danton, that fierce Jacobin, said, "The kings of Europe threaten us. Let us cast down at their feet as the gauntlet of battle the head of a king." His followers had made up their minds that the head should be that of Louis XVI.

Without the hall the mob shouted fiercely, demanding that the tyrant, as they called the king, should be put to death. Within the Assembly there were some who, had they dared, would have saved the king.

When the members were asked to vote, a large number declared that Louis Capet, as they called the king, was guilty of trying to rob the nation of its liberty. A much smaller number voted that his punishment should be death. And this sentence was decreed to be carried out in twenty-four hours.

It was a cruel fate that had overtaken the honest, well-intentioned king, who, if he had but known how, might so easily have kept the love of his people. Not for his own mistakes, so much as for the sins of his fathers, was Louis XVI. put to death.

At eight o'clock on the morning of January 21, 1793,

the king was led to the place of execution. The evening before he had said good-by to his wife and children, nor would he ask to see them again. But they heard the trampling of feet, the beating of drums, and they knew he had gone from them for ever.

Quietly, with no sign of fear, Louis XVI. mounted the scaffold.

"Be silent, drummers," he cried, and then, as they obeyed, he spoke to the multitude. "Frenchmen," he said, "I die innocent, I pardon my enemies, I desire that France——"

But the king's last words were lost, for the drums again began to beat.

"Son of St. Louis, ascend to heaven," said the priest who was with him to the last, and at his words the executioner did his dreadful work, and King Louis was no more.

"Long live the Nation! long live the Republic!" shouted the people as they turned away from the terrible scene.

CHAPTER LXXIV

MARIE ANTOINETTE IS EXECUTED

THE Assembly soon found that they had not ended their troubles by beheading their king.

England showed her horror of the deed by ordering the French ambassador to leave London, an act which would probably be followed by war. Russia ordered all Frenchmen to leave her dominions within twenty days. Austria again invaded France.

But worse than her foreign foes were those France had at home, where the members of Convention were quarreling among themselves.

To quell these disorders a Committee of Public Safety was formed, and on this committee sat Danton, Marat, Robespierre.

These men, along with six others, had the power of imprisoning and putting to death any one whom they suspected of even venturing to dislike the Republic.

The Convention was meanwhile holding its meetings in the hall of the Tuileries. Among its members there were some who were not such keen Republicans as were the members of the Committee of Public Safety. It would be well, said Danton, to get rid of these weak persons.

So the Tuileries was surrounded by troops, and the members suspected by Danton were dismissed from the Convention, and many of them were afterwards beheaded.

These Republicans who were not so fierce as the Jacobins were called Girondists.

Some of the Girondists escaped from Paris to the prov-

inces, and prepared to return in force to the capital to fight against the Jacobins. Many of the scattered Royalists joined the Girondists and so strengthened their own cause.

Marat, who had been one of the most determined to see Louis XVI. beheaded, was now overtaken by a speedy vengeance.

Charlotte Corday, a beautiful young French girl, had often heard of the cruelty of Marat. She believed that her country would be saved if Marat was dead.

And so, brooding and brooding over the thought, she at length made up her mind that she herself would free her country from the cruel tyrant.

In July 1793 she left her home and traveled to Paris.

Marat was ill and was forced to spend much of his time in a hot bath to ease his pain. Charlotte, when she reached his house, was told that he was too ill to see any one.

But having determined to see the Jacobin, Charlotte Corday would take no denial. She went a second time to Marat's door and begged to see him, saying that she had important secrets which she must tell to him alone. Marat, in his bath, heard what the girl said, and called to her to come in.

Charlotte did not hesitate, she loved her country too well.

Eagerly she entered the house, and being admitted to Marat's presence, she told him the names of some pretended traitors. Then, as he turned aside to write down their names, she pulled her dagger from its hiding-place and stabbed, as she verily believed, the tyrant of France.

Marat screamed for help, and Charlotte Corday, who had not tried to escape, was at once arrested and soon after executed. She showed no fear as she was taken to her death, going to it calm and smiling, as one who had done her duty.

But Charlotte Corday had not accomplished what she had hoped by the death of Marat. His removal only left

room for Robespierre and his terrible Council of Ten to begin the Reign of Terror.

This Council of Ten began its reign by imprisoning those suspected of disloyalty to the Government.

In a few days the prisons were full, and to make room for others the guillotine was kept constantly at work.

Prisoners were taken for trial before the Committee of Public Safety. But as had happened earlier in the year, the trial was a mock one, batches of seventy or eighty prisoners being taken at the same time from the prison to the place of execution.

No one dare trust another. A friend might at any time accuse his friend, a servant his master. Spies were in every household. Innocent and guilty suffered together, while noble ladies were thrown into prison with those who had been brought up in miserable hovels.

Marie Antoinette had been in prison ever since she had been taken to the Temple with Louis XVI. Her captivity was now drawing to a close.

She had changed greatly since sorrow had fallen upon her. Her hair, which had once been golden, was now quite white, much of her beauty, too, was gone, but she had grown quiet and patient, and no murmur at her treatment ever crossed her lips. She had her little son and daughter with her, and the poor queen spent her days teaching her children and working beautiful embroidery.

But in July 1793 her children were taken from her, and the dauphin was given into the charge of a rough and cruel shoemaker called Simon. Then, indeed, the queen thought that her heart would break.

At first she would watch hour after hour from the window of the Temple, that she might catch a glimpse of her little son as he was taken for his daily walk.

Before long, however, she was removed from the Temple to a dark and gloomy prison. Here no candle was given to her, and even her needlework was taken away. Thus, with

no work for her hands, no occupation for her tired heart, the long days slipped by slowly and unheeded.

In October 1793 she was summoned before the Council of Ten and condemned to death. It was with little sorrow that she heard her sentence. Life had ceased to be of any worth when her son was taken from her.

Never was Marie Antoinette more a queen than when she stepped upon the scaffold and, quiet and brave, laid her head upon the block. In another moment her sufferings were ended.

After the queen's death, Elizabeth, the sister of Louis XVI., Philip of Orleans, who had voted for the king's death, and thousands of others, known and unknown, were hurried to the scaffold.

To add to the misery of the people, if that indeed was possible, the Jacobins now gave orders that prayers should no longer be offered in any church, that Sunday should no longer be observed. And in the cathedral of Notre Dame, where the people had ever gone to worship God, the Jacobins ordered an image of the Goddess of Reason to be set up and worshiped. When, as well as all these changes, the names of the days and months of the year had been altered, the Jacobins believed that a new world had sprung into being.

The Council of Ten was growing weary of bloodshed, all save one, and that one was Robespierre. Little by little the other members began to fear this terrible man, to think that if he lived much longer even their lives would not be safe.

Lest, therefore, he should cause their fall, the Council resolved to accuse him as a tyrant.

When they tried to arrest him Robespierre resisted, and, rather than submit to be taken prisoner, he attempted to shoot himself, but the bullet only entered his jaw.

After a mock trial, such as he had himself given to others, the tyrant was condemned and taken to the guillotine. With Robespierre's death the Reign of Terror came to an end. A

few days later the Convention ordered the prison doors to be opened, the prisoners to be set free.

But there was one little prisoner to whom the opening of the doors could do no good, and this was the dauphin, Louis XVII., as some few people called him.

As you know, the little prince had been taken from his mother and given into the charge of a shoemaker called Simon.

The child, who had always been loved and cared for, was now cuffed and kicked, taught to drink and swear, until his health was ruined and his mind was wellnigh a blank.

After about six months of such cruel treatment Simon gave up his post, and Robespierre sent no one to take his place.

The little dauphin was left in a cell, unwashed and neglected. Often he had barely enough to eat. When Robespierre was put to death, some of the less fierce Republicans remembered the little prince, and he was put under the care of respectable people. Even now, however, he was kept as a prisoner and treated harshly, though not with the cruelty Simon had used.

In May 1794 the child became seriously ill, and a doctor was sent to visit him. His nurses paid him but scant attention, while his sister, who lived in the same house, was not allowed to see her brother.

It is said by some historians that the prince died in June, that at the end happiness stole into the child-heart and he heard "heavenly music and the voice of his mother." But others tell us that the child escaped from his gaolers and lived quietly for many years after he was believed to be dead.

CHAPTER LXXV

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

During the Reign of Terror the armies of the Republic had gained success after success over its foreign foes.

They had, indeed, won more for their country than had Louis XIV., who, you remember, spent most of his long reign trying to gain new dominions for France.

At home, too, the Republicans won a great victory at Toulon, a port near to Marseilles. The citizens of Toulon were Royalists and determined, with the help of English and Spanish fleets, to hold the town against the Republican troops. They might have succeeded had it not been for a young lieutenant of twenty years old, who was with the Republican troops.

This lieutenant was given the place of the commander of the artillery, who had been wounded. He placed his cannon in the best available positions, and soon ball after ball came crashing down upon the fleets, the enemy's forts, and into the town itself, striking ships and buildings alike with deadly skill.

It was impossible for the citizens to stay longer in the town, and as many as were able took refuge on board the English fleet.

But wherever the ships moved the cannon-balls still followed them, until at length the commander was forced to withdraw, and Toulon was in the hands of the Republican troops.

The young man, whose quick eye had seen what should be done, was no other than Napoleon Bonaparte. This, his first great success, took place in 1793.

His next feat was in Paris, on the Day of the Sections, as it was called.

The scattered Royalists had, you remember, joined the Girondists. They, two years later, marched toward Paris, their armies divided into bands or sections. Their aim was to overthrow the Government.

Napoleon Bonaparte was not given the actual command of the Republican troops, which was in the hands of Paul Barras, but Barras knew the young man's ability and made him his lieutenant.

Once again a glance from his keen searching eyes showed the young general what it was necessary to do to win the day. Sending for guns, he placed them in a position to command the streets and bridges leading to the Tuileries.

As the army of the Royalists advanced in sections along the streets toward the palace, followed by the rabble, Napoleon ordered his cannon to fire.

Down the crowded streets crashed the deadly shot, killing both armed men and terrified unarmed men and women. No escape was possible, and the Royalists and Girondists were soon mown down as grass. In a few hours the Royalist plot to take Paris was completely crushed, and to Napoleon Bonaparte belonged the glory of the Day of the Sections, as it was called.

Napoleon reaped promotion as well as glory, for in a short time the young soldier was given the command of the French army in Italy.

A few days after his promotion Napoleon married Josephine, a beautiful and fascinating woman. In days to come her charming manners and wonderful gift of conversation were a great help to her famous husband.

"I conquer provinces," Napoleon was used to say, "but Josephine wins hearts."

From this time, 1796, the story of France is really the story of the life of Napoleon Bonaparte.

But before I tell you of his wonderful adventures, let me tell you something about his boyhood.

Napoleon Bonaparte was born in Corsica in August 1769. Corsica is a little island covered with trees, lying about fifty miles off the west coast of Italy.

As Napoleon grew up he learned to love his island home and to hate the French who had conquered his nation. For many years, indeed, he hated the very name of France.

From the time he was quite a little boy, Napoleon wished to be a soldier. He liked, too, to imitate soldiers in every possible way, playing mimic battles with his playmates and drilling his elder brother Joseph, as though Joseph were the recruit, he the officer.

When Napoleon went off to school in the morning his mother gave him a slice of white bread to eat by the way.

But the boy would have no dainties. He wished to have only the coarse brown bread which was all that real soldiers had to eat. And the first soldier the little fellow met was given the slice of white bread in exchange for a hunch of brown bread.

The lad's favorite lessons were geography and arithmetic, and he would often scribble sums on his nursery walls as well as draw rough figures of soldiers marching to battle.

Even in play-hours Napoleon was haunted by his love of arithmetical problems.

Once, while he was quite young, he mounted a pony and rode off to a windmill. When he reached it he jumped gayly from his little steed, and then, with the gravity of a sage, asked the miller how much corn the mill ground in an hour. Being told, he sat down to find out how much could be done in a day, in a week. Having solved his problem he hastily mounted and rode home again, to be welcomed with joy by his mother.

His mother Letizia took great pains to curb her son's hasty temper.

"She passed over none of our faults," said Napoleon when he was grown up, but he said it without resentment, knowing that she had trained him and his brother with love as well as severity.

All his life Napoleon was proud of his mother and of all that she had done for him. Nor did he fear to say so shortly before his death.

"It is to my mother, to her good precepts and upright example, that I owe my success and any great thing I have accomplished. My mother was a superb woman, a woman of ability and courage." Such was the fine tribute Napoleon Bonaparte paid to his mother Letizia.

When Napoleon was nine years old his parents determined that he and Joseph should be sent away to school, Joseph to be trained as a priest, Napoleon as a soldier. But as the boys, being Corsicans, spoke only Italian, they went at first together to the college of Autun, that Napoleon might learn to speak French before going on to the military school at Brienne.

Letizia wept as she said good-by to her two elder boys, but they soon forgot the pain of leaving home, there was so much to see and to hear on their journey.

On the first day of the new year, 1779, the travelers reached the college of Autun.

Napoleon was now in France, the country he had learned to hate, and in a college where he and his brother were looked on as foreigners by the French boys, who teased and laughed at them for being Corsicans, for belonging to a conquered country.

Napoleon, young as he was, could ill brook a slighting word about his beloved island home, and his hasty temper made him no favorite with his new companions.

In April, Napoleon left Autun to go to the military school at Brienne. Only those of noble birth and without fortune were admitted to this school, where the expenses of the students were paid by the King of France.

It had been hard to leave home, it was perhaps even harder now to say good-by to Joseph, the last link with Corsica, and to go away alone to Brienne. For you must remember that Napoleon was still only nine years old.

At Brienne Napoleon did not easily make friends with the boys. He was shy and, they thought, sulky, not joining in their games, but spending his playtime in reading. One of his favorite books was *Plutarch's Lives,* which he read in French.

The book enthralled the lad. As he read of the heroes of whom Plutarch tells, he dreamed that he was reading of his own Corsican hero, Paoli, who had tried to save his country from the yoke of France.

Although the patriot had been forced to flee to England for safety, Napoleon, did not believe he would always have to remain in exile.

"Paoli will return," he would sometimes say, "and as soon as I have strength I will go to help him, and perhaps together we shall be able to shake the odious yoke from off the neck of Corsica."

At Brienne each student had a small piece of ground given to him, for, to dig, to sow, to weed is healthy exercise for boys.

Napoleon dug his little plot with great eagerness, but he did not plant in it seeds, but shrubs, which he surrounded with a paling. To this retreat Napoleon stole to read unseen and undisturbed, while the other boys played games and weeded their gardens.

After he had been at Brienne four or five years Napoleon grew more friendly with the other boys. He even became leader of their games, and when they played at battles their captain.

One severe winter, when snow lay thick upon the ground, Napoleon said to his comrades, "Let us build fortresses of snow."

This was quickly done. Then Napoleon divided the boys

into two armies, one to defend, the other to attack the forts.

Day after day, as long as the snow lasted, the battle raged, Napoleon, as captain, directing now the assault, now the defense.

In 1784 Napoleon's training at Brienne came to an end, and he was sent to the military school at Paris.

At Brienne monks had been the boy's schoolmasters, at Paris Napoleon was among real soldiers. He always worked hard, but now he redoubled his efforts, so that soon he might be ready to join the army.

In a year he passed his examinations, and was then made a lieutenant in one of the finest regiments.

The lieutenant was still young, only sixteen, and the army rules compelled him to wear his school uniform, but—and what boy would not have gloried in the fact?—he was now allowed to have a sword buckled to his side.

Then, being in the French army, Napoleon began to think of France as his own country, although he never forgot his love for Corsica.

CHAPTER LXXVI

THE BRIDGE OF LODI

After Napoleon was made a lieutenant in 1785, the years passed without any great event until the siege of Toulon and the Day of the Sections, of which you have already read.

Soon after, being appointed commander of the French army in Italy in 1795, Napoleon left France to begin his new duties.

The army was encamped at Nice, and here the young commander soon joined it. He found the French soldiers ragged and hungry, cold and hopeless.

It was scarcely strange that the troops should look with surprise, touched with scorn, at the young officer who had been sent to command them. He was so small, so thin, was all they thought as their first glance fell upon Napoleon. But as they looked again and caught the keen and searching glance of their new general, they knew that he was one to lead and to command.

His first words won their hearts. "Soldiers," he cried, looking straight into the starving, hopeless faces of his men, "Soldiers, you are hungry, you are naked. The Government owes you much, but can do nothing for you. I will lead you into the most fruitful plains in the world. Rich provinces, great cities will be in your power. There you will find honor and glory and riches. Soldiers of the army of Italy, will you lack courage?"

As they listened to Napoleon's glowing words the soldiers forgot their cold and hunger. And when they found that on the march Napoleon shared their hardships, that always he

was at the point of danger, risking his life as though he were a common soldier, they began to love and worship their young commander. Soon there was nowhere that they would not follow if he led the way.

At Nice, after his arrival, he had almost at once disbanded a regiment for disobeying orders, and stern discipline and just punishments won the respect of the men as well as their devotion.

So that the army might travel quickly and take the enemy unawares, Napoleon trained his soldiers to march without provisions and to leave even their tents behind. Shelter and food they would find in plenty in the cities they conquered.

I cannot tell you of all Napoleon's battles, for before a year had passed he had fought more than twelve times and had beaten several Austrian armies.

But on May 1, 1796, the terrible passage of the Bridge of Lodi took place, and of that I must tell you.

Napoleon, who was marching on Milan, had forced the Austrians to retreat before him to the river Adda.

To cross the river it was necessary to pass over a wooden bridge called the Bridge of Lodi. The rearguard of the Austrian army was ordered to hold the bridge against Napoleon and his men.

So it was that when the French general reached the river, he saw on the opposite side the Austrian guns, which were trained upon the bridge.

It was plain it would be no easy matter to cross the narrow but swift-flowing river.

Yet Napoleon never hesitated. He ordered his cannon to be placed opposite that of the enemy. They, seeing that Napoleon meant to attempt to cross the bridge, tried to destroy it.

But they tried in vain, the French fire being so persistent that the Austrians were forced to retreat.

Napoleon then, choosing a column of his most seasoned troops, ordered them to press forward to take the bridge.

It was "impossible," he was told. But with his superb confidence Napoleon declared that there was no such word as "impossible" in the French language.

Thus encouraged, the chosen troop hurled itself upon the bridge, only to be met by a storm of fire from the Austrian cannon.

The foremost soldiers fell, while those behind pressed forward only to be mown down as grass.

Yet, dauntless as before, others pressing forward took the place of those who fell until the middle of the bridge was reached. Here they too perished before the fierce hail of shot and shell by which they were assailed.

Those who were left hesitated. For one short moment it seemed that the attempt to take the Bridge of Lodi was going to prove a failure.

But Napoleon seized a flag and himself urged his men forward. One of his officers, called Lannes, dashed on, followed closely by his men, and in a few moments more the bridge was in the hands of the French, and the Austrians were fleeing in all directions.

So terrible had been the slaughter that Napoleon in after-days would often speak of the "terrible passage of Lodi."

It was after this great victory that the French soldiers, proud of their brave young general, gave him the title by which he was henceforth often called. The "Little Corporal" indeed became, after the taking of the Bridge of Lodi, more than ever the idol of the army.

Even when it seemed that Napoleon was caught in a trap by his enemies and would have to yield, his amazing confidence and daring found a simple way of escape.

So it happened when the Austrians had been defeated by Napoleon on the battlefield of Lonato. A corps of about four thousand of the enemy managed to escape to the hills, and as they wandered about they met a much smaller force of French soldiers, with the Little Corporal in their midst.

The Austrian officer at once sent an envoy bearing a flag of truce to Napoleon, to bid him and his men surrender.

As was usual, the envoy was led blindfold into the presence of the general. When the bandage was removed he was startled to find himself in the presence of the French commander, who was surrounded by all his officers.

With flashing eyes and haughty voice Napoleon declared that a summons to surrender when he was in the midst of his army was an insult. He then bade the envoy hasten back to the Austrian camp to warn his superior officer, that if he did not at once lay down his arms he and his men would be shot.

So bewildered were the Austrians by this bold demand that they believed Napoleon had his entire force at his back, and they hastily did as they were bid and laid down their arms.

You can picture to yourself the indignation and dismay of the Austrian officer when he found out that he had been tricked, that while he had had four thousand men Napoleon had had only twelve hundred, and might easily have been captured.

As the conquerer made his way through the north of Italy many of the princes paid heavy sums of money to purchase peace.

But Napoleon demanded more than money. To please the Parisians he took from the Italian cities many of their most beautiful pictures and statues, and sent them home to glorify the Louvre.

In November 1796 another great battle was fought at Arcola, a village which was approached on the west by a great stretch of marshland. Here, as at Lodi, it was necessary for the French to take a bridge that crossed the river Adige.

So fierce was the Austrian fire as the French approached the bridge that the bravest of Napoleon's men fell back before it.

Then the Little Corporal did even more than he had done at Lodi. Seizing a flag, he himself led his men across the bridge, and he had reached the middle when an officer fell dead at his side.

A small company of French soldiers, seeing the danger in which their beloved leader stood, dragged him backward, hoping to take him to some less perilous spot.

In their effort they were hampered by the enemy, who succeeded in pushing them into the marsh on the west of Arcola.

But at the sight of their general's danger, the French made a desperate stand and repulsed the Austrians, while Louis Bonaparte, one of Napoleon's brothers, rescued the Little Corporal from the swamp.

For two days the battle raged, and then on the third Napoleon once again wrested the victory from his foe.

It is told that after this long battle Napoleon found one of his sentinels asleep at his post.

The Little Corporal lifted the soldier's musket and stood at attention until the weary man awoke and saw to his dismay who was keeping watch in his place.

Nothing could save him from the most severe punishment, thought the soldier. But he was mistaken. Napoleon, knowing that he had been worn out, forgave him, and won the unfailing devotion of his sentry.

Many more were the victories won by Napoleon over the Austrians, until at length, in the autumn of 1797, a treaty was made at Campo-Formio. By this treaty France received Belgium and the provinces bordering on the Rhine.

CHAPTER LXXVII

THE BATTLE OF THE PYRAMIDS

After the Treaty of Campo-Formio was signed, Napoleon went back to Paris.

Citizens and peasants alike greeted him as though he were a king. Every one was anxious to do honor to the conquerer.

The welcome he received was such as might well have satisfied the most ambitious. But Napoleon was not greatly moved by the admiration of the crowd. He knew too well how easily it might change to hatred.

"This same unthinking crowd," he said, "under a slight change of circumstances, would follow me just as eagerly to the scaffold."

The directors at Paris, who had made Napoleon commander of the army in Italy, soon grew jealous of the favor the people showed to the Little Corporal.

Rumors reached them that the soldiers thought that the general whom they idolized should become King of France. After that the one idea of the directors was to get Napoleon out of the country again as soon as possible.

So, in 1798, the great general was made commander-in-chief of the army which was meant to conquer England. But Napoleon knew that he was not yet strong enough to conquer England, so he determined instead to go on a great expedition to Egypt. If he could win that country he would be able to spoil Britain's trade with India, and to conquer that country was ever his great desire.

In may 1798 a great fleet was fitted out, and Napoleon

sailed from Toulon with a splendid army, which included many of his bravest and best-disciplined soldiers.

Nelson, the Great English admiral, was cruising in the Mediterranean, keeping a sharp look-out for the French. But a great storm arose and many of the British ships were damaged, and the fleet was forced to take refuge in a port. And while the English fleet was in the port Napoleon sailed away out of Nelson's reach.

Taking the island of Malta on the way, the French at length, in the beginning of July, came in sight of Alexandria.

After a short but sharp struggle the city was taken and the French flag hoisted on her walls. Leaving soldiers to hold the town, Napoleon then marched on toward Cairo, which was in the hands of the Mamelukes.

The Mamelukes were slaves who had long ago either been taken prisoners of war or had been bought as slaves in the market-places of their own homes, which lay hidden here and there among the Caucasus Mountains. They had been trained as soldiers from the time that they were quite little children, and at first, when they were carried into Egypt, they were made the Sultan's bodyguard.

Before they had been long in their new home they became so powerful that it was no unusual thing for a Mameluke himself to become the Sultan of Egypt.

By the time that Napoleon came to Egypt much of their power had been taken from them by the Turks. They were still, however, fierce and terrible warriors.

Over the burning sand, the sun pouring its rays relentlessly upon them, the French soldiers marched. Parched by thirst, sometimes attacked by snakes, they were little able to repulse the wandering tribes by which they were attacked.

The heat made the thirst of the troops intolerable. Even when they reached a well, it was usually to find that the Arabs had filled it with stones and that it would be possible to get water only after hours of toil.

Even brave officers gave themselves up to despair, and

in their misery tore off their cockades, murmuring threats of rebellion.

But neither the heat nor the clamor of his men disturbed the Little Corporal. Unheeding the discontent of his soldiers, he marched before them, his uniform on as usual, while they, so intense was the heat, had flung off most of their garments.

One of his officers, bolder than the others, even dared to taunt Napoleon, saying to him, "Well, general, are you going to take us to India thus?"

"No, I would not undertake that with such soldiers as you," answered Napoleon quickly.

After that the officers were less ready to let the general hear their complaints.

At length the weary march was over, and the army reached the banks of the Nile and was able to quench its thirst. It then took up its position near the Pyramids. These were the tombs of the ancient kings of Egypt, which had stood silent, unchanged, during many hundred years. As the French awaited the onslaught of the Mamelukes, who were also encamped near the Pyramids and were preparing to attack the rash invaders, Napoleon rode up and down the ranks of his army. "Soldiers," he cried, reining up before them and pointing to the Pyramids, "from these summits forty centuries watch your actions."

Then the Mamelukes, shouting strange wild battle-cries, rushed like a whirlwind upon the solid squares of the French army.

The steady fire that received them swept the fierce horsemen aside, until at length, leaving their comrades slain in heaps, the Mamelukes turned to flee.

Thus in July 1798 the battle of the Pyramids was won by the French, and Napoleon entered Cairo in triumph.

Soon after this great victory Napoleon was thunderstruck to hear that his fleet, which had been sailing in the Bay of Aboukir, had been attacked and defeated by Nelson at the

battle of the Nile. It was a serious blow, for it left Napoleon with his army cut off from France.

But he was too good a general to show his soldiers how much the destruction of his fleet disturbed him.

A little later he defeated the Turks with great slaughter at the battle of Aboukir.

Many of the enemy threw themselves into the sea to escape the terrible attack of the French cavalry.

After the battle was over, Napoleon, hearing that he was needed at home, resolved to leave his army and go back to France. His soldiers, had they known that their great commander meant to leave them, might have proved restive. So one night in the month of August, when it was dark save for the light of the stars, Napoleon stole away and embarked at Alexandria. With some difficulty his ships escaped the English, who were cruising about in the hope of capturing French boats, and in October 1799 Napoleon reached Paris after an absence of about fifteen months.

CHAPTER LXXVIII

THE GREAT ST. BERNARD PASS

On his return to Paris, Napoleon was received with even more delight than when he came back from Italy, although the directors did not join very heartily in his welcome.

They were quarreling with each other, while a council made up of five hundred members, and therefore called the Council of the Five Hundred, was in confusion. France was in dire need of a ruler, and a strong one. Napoleon saw that here was the opportunity which his ambition had long desired.

So one day, in November 1799, the great general went to St. Cloud, for it was there that the Council of the Five Hundred was sitting.

Napoleon had enemies as well as friends among the members. No sooner did his enemies see him enter the hall than they shouted, "Death to the tryant! Down with the dictator!"

For a moment Napoleon seemed disturbed by these cries, but he quickly made up his mind to act.

The council evidently meant to dispute his claim to rule France. Then it must be turned out!

So without more ado Napoleon called his soldiers, who had been posted outside, to come and empty the hall.

As they advanced with fixed bayonets, the Five Hundred forgot their dignity and fled from the room. Through the doors, out of the windows, any way by which they could, the quaking members sought to escape from the stern soldiers of the general.

That same evening Napoleon was chosen First Consul by a few of the scattered Five Hundred. Henceforth "the Corsican" was the ruler of France.

Being First Consul, Napoleon went to live at the palace of the Tuileries, and delighted every one by his splendid entertainments. These were made the more perfect by the presence of his wife, the charming and beautiful Josephine.

It was not long before the First Consul grew weary of the gayety of the palace. He wished to be again on the battlefield at the head of his great army.

So in 1800 he once more left France to set out for Italy, where he hoped to reconquer the cities which the French had lost while their Little Corporal was in Egypt.

To reach Italy Napoleon determined to take his army over the Alps by the Great St. Bernard pass.

It was a perilous undertaking, for at places there was not a path but only a mere ledge, so narrow that should a soldier take one false step he would fall into the abyss beneath. At any moment, too, an avalanche might descend and destroy the whole army. Yet along these narrow ledges and up the steepest precipices the soldiers toiled, oppressed by the weight of their armor, sometimes forced to take the cannon from their carriages and drag them over the worst part of the ascent.

But when most discouraged the soldiers had only to look at Napoleon, seated on a mule, clad in the gray overcoat which to the army already seemed part of himself, to feel that with such a leader no obstacle could be too great for them.

At the summit of the pass the army was welcomed by the monks who lived in the famous hospice of St. Bernard.

Tables were spread out of doors for the soldiers, with bread and cheese as well as wine. These refreshments had been sent on by Napoleon that his troops might be revived after their terrible climb. But the monks of St. Bernard in their charity added to the plentiful supply provided by the general.

The descent was as difficult and perilous as the ascent had been, but at length it too was over, and seven days after the soldiers had begun their toilsome march they poured down into the plain of Italy and Napoleon marched toward Milan.

Here, where he was hailed as a deliverer by those who had suffered from the Austrians, the First Consul spent a few days rearranging his army. He then marched toward the village of Marengo, from which a small body of French soldiers had already driven the enemy.

As Napoleon approached, he found the Austrians already prepared to meet him on the plain of Marengo. Here, on June 14, 1800, a great battle took place, the Austrian army being nearly twice as large as the French.

Early on the morning of the 14th the Austrians succeeded in retaking the village of Marengo. Lannes, one of Napoleon's bravest officers, although fighting desperately, was forced gradually to retire.

At that moment Napoleon rode hastily from the rear and threw a company of his own guards upon the enemy. While the enemy was thus checked, Lannes was able to rally his men.

By two in the afternoon it seemed as though the French would be defeated. In spite of all they could do, in spite of the encouragement of the First Consul, the day was almost lost, when, by rare good fortune, a young French general named Desaix arrived on the field with fresh troops. "The battle is lost," he is reported to have said to Napoleon, "but there is time to gain another."

Encouraged by the appearance of reënforcements, the French attacked the enemy with new courage, while the Austrians, having thought that the day was already theirs, were taken by surprise.

Volley after volley of musketry was sent in among the startled Austrians by the Ninth Light Infantry, which was the name of Desaix' regiment.

Suddenly the men saw their general fall to the ground. Then with a terrible cry they rushed forward to avenge their leader's death. From that day, so great were the deeds they did, the regiment of the Ninth Light Infantry was called "The Incomparable."

One more unexpected charge of cavalry, then the Austrians gave way and fled. The French had won the hardly fought battle of Marengo.

Napoleon was grieved when he heard that Desaix had perished.

"If only I could have embraced Desaix upon the battlefield," he said regretfully, "I should have made him Minister of War and a prince too, had it been in my power."

The blow given to the Austrians at Marengo was so great that they begged for peace, to which Napoleon agreed. But war soon broke out again, and the terrible battle of Hohenlinden was fought in December 1800. Then once again the Austrians sued for peace, which Napoleon granted to them on condition that all northern Italy should again be given back to France.

CHAPTER LXXIX

"THE SUN OF AUSTERLITZ"

When Napoleon returned to Paris after his brilliant victory at Marengo, the crowds thronging the streets surrounded him, hoping to catch if it were but a glimpse of their idol. The city was illuminated, the people forgot to work, and danced and feasted in his honor.

But although the first Consul was worshiped by many of the people, he was hated by some. His chief enemies were among the Royalists and the Jacobins.

The Royalists hated him because he was now a king in all but name, the Jacobins because he was the head of the Republic. Plots were even made against his life.

Once, as he was driving to the opera, a barrel which had been filled with gunpowder was placed on the road by which he must pass. But his carriage got safely by before it exploded and Napoleon escaped, though when the explosion did take place many innocent people suffered in his stead.

The Royalists wished to kill the First Consul that the brother of Louis xvi. might be placed on the throne.

One of their plots was discovered, and the Duke of Enghien, who belonged to the house of Condé, was shot, although it was not proved that he had anything to do with the attempt to kill Napoleon.

The princes of Europe were very angry that Napoleon had dared to put this great noble to death. But the friends of the First Consul said it was time to make Napoleon king, so that a Bourbon might never again sit on the throne of France.

Before long the French deputies and Senate agreed that it would be well that Napoleon should be crowned. Of the army and of the people he was already the idol, and they believed no honor too great for their hero.

So in December 1804 the Pope, at the request of the First Consul, journeyed toward Paris.

Napoleon determined to meet Pius VII. before he reached the capital. He therefore went off for a day's hunting, and on his homeward way, radiant with health and power, he leaped from his horse and awaited the Pope's carriage. As he drove up to the spot on which Napoleon stood, Pius VII. ordered his carriage to stop. Then the old man, clad in white and wearing on his feet only while silk shoes, alighted on the cold damp ground.

As Napoleon welcomed his guest, the general's carriage drove up. The doors on either side were opened, the Pope entering on the left while the First Consul took the seat of honor on the right.

Soon after his arrival the ceremony for which the Pope had come to France took place. Amid the greatest pomp, and clad in the richest robes, the Emperor Napoleon and the Empress Josephine mounted the steps of the new carriage provided for the great occasion and drove to the cathedral.

Here the emperor and the empress were anointed with holy oil. Then, as the Pope took the crown to place it on the emperor's head, Napoleon, reaching out his hand, himself placed the crown upon his own head.

The ceremony was over, and loud shouts of "Long live the emperor!" rent the air.

A year later Napoleon was in Milan cathedral, for he wished to be crowned King of Italy as well as Emperor of the French.

As he placed the iron crown of the Italian kings upon his head, the emperor said, as the ancient kings of Lombardy had been used to do at their coronation, "God hath given it me; beware who touches it!"

Having now satisfied one part of his ambitions, Napoleon turned once more to his long-cherished scheme of invading England.

He had already begun to prepare for it by setting up a huge camp at Boulogne, and ordering a fleet to be built to carry his troops across the Channel.

But the English fleet guarded the coast and scoured the Channel with such vigilance that Napoleon was forced to see that his plans would never be successful.

Other countries, too, were showing signs of impatience with the emperor. Before long Austria and Russia, as well as Sweden and England, entered into a league against Napoleon, for they thought that unless his ambition was curbed, he would wish to add their crowns to those that were already his.

For a time the league seemed to have little effect on the emperor's course. In Austria he gained victory after victory, and at length entered Vienna in triumph.

Here he heard bitter news. The French fleet, as well as many Spanish vessels, had been utterly destroyed by Lord Nelson at the battle of Trafalgar in October 1805. This put an end to Napoleon's power on the sea.

As was perhaps natural, the emperor believed that had he but been present at the battle such a disaster would never have befallen France. He determined, however, that this misfortune should be forgotten through the glory of a great victory on land. So one cold foggy morning in December Napoleon met the Russian and Austrian armies on the plain of Austerlitz.

The Russians were in a strong position on the hills, but for some reason they left the heights and began to descend to the plain.

When the emperor saw what the enemy was doing he was pleased indeed, and with his usual confidence he remarked, "In twenty-four hours they are mine."

In the fog the two armies had drawn nearer to each other

than they knew. Suddenly the sun shone out, the mist lifted and the French found themselves face to face with the enemy.

As Napoleon led his men to the attack he cried: "Soldiers, this battle must be a thunder-clap."

For a time it seemed that for all his genius, and in spite of the devotion of his men, the emperor would be defeated.

But the bravery of Lannes helped to turn the tide of battle, and after four or five hours of fiercest struggle, the French had once again won the victory.

The battle of Austerlitz was one of the greatest of Napoleon's many victories. It took place on the first anniversary of his coronation. Those of the soldiers who escaped the terrible slaughter of that day often spoke of the cheerful omen that had braced their hearts for the battle. It was "the Sun of Austerlitz."

After the battle was over, what was left of the Austrian and Russian armies wandered about the country more like bands of robbers than like the trained soldiers of a great army.

The famous English minister, William Pitt, was so troubled by the victory of Austerlitz, that his health, already feeble, grew worse, and soon afterwards he died.

But though the Powers leagued together against the emperor had been defeated, they did not mean to accept their defeat tamely.

Russia, aided now by Prussia, raised a large force and marched against the emperor. The chief commander of the Prussians was the Duke of Brunswick, a brave and gallant leader. Unfortunately his men were more used to peace than to war.

In October 1806 the armies met close to the town of Jena. Overlooking the town was a steep hill, on the top of which Napoleon ordered cannon to be placed.

Any one but the emperor would have thought it an im-

possible feat to get cannon to the top of such a steep ascent, but as you have heard, "impossible" was a word unknown to Napoleon.

There was no pathway up the hill. A road had to be made, at places, through rocks that seemed impassable.

The soldiers, however, began to dig and to blast, cheered by the words and the presence of the emperor, who himself encouraged them in their difficult task.

After untiring industry the task was accomplished, soldiers and cannon both being in position on the top of the hill that commanded Jena.

The Prussians did not know that they would be attacked by the emperor himself. They thought that he was far away with the main body of his troops, and that at Jena they had to fight only a small division of the French army.

Frederick-William, their king, had not even waited to join his allies, while his army was no larger than he believed his enemy's to be.

Moreover, they had not the faintest idea that the French troops had made a road to the top of the Landgrafenberg, as the hill overlooking Jena was called.

Early in the morning the French were astir, and soon the guns on the height began to pour their deadly fire down upon the Prussian army.

The Prussians were startled, and before long were in confusion. Another battle was also being fought at Auerstädt, about twelve miles away, in which the Duke of Brunswick was slain. He was beloved by his men, who ever after wore black uniforms in memory of their gallant leader. His son, too, vowed that he would be revenged on the French for his father's death.

It was evening when the battle of Jena was over, and the emperor saw that the Prussians were flying in all directions, pursued by the French cavalry.

Then Napoleon, with the kindness which won the devotion

of his men, rode over the battlefield, often dismounting to give brandy to some wounded soldier.

If he found one alive where he least expected it, he "gave way to a joy it is impossible to describe."

Having defeated the Prussians, the emperor marched with his army through their land, plundering and burning as he went. On, until he reached Berlin, he marched, entering the city in triumph as a conquerer.

CHAPTER LXXX

THE BERLIN DECREE

From Berlin the emperor aimed a blow at Britain, which he had long desired to do. The famous Berlin Decree forbade any country to carry on trade with Britain, and also declared that no British goods were to be received at any of the seaports of his empire.

In spite of this stern decree Britain continued to send her goods to Europe, while even in France itself the emperor's command was not obeyed, many British goods being smuggled into the country.

The Berlin Decree did more to harm Napoleon's popularity than perhaps he guessed. Those who until now had admired, began to look coldly upon him. They felt that he was willing to sacrifice the welfare of his people to the glory, as he thought it, of humbling Britain.

Soon afterwards Napoleon went to Poland with his soldiers. The most important battle in this campaign, which did not always go well with the French, was that of Friedland, where many thousands of brave soldiers on both sides perished. Shortly afterwards Russia and Prussia concluded an armistice with the victor.

Napoleon and the two sovereigns then met at Tilsit. Here they each held their separate courts, giving splendid banquets and balls to which they invited one another.

But although the court was gay, Napoleon did not give all his time to pleasure. He took care to wring a promise from both the Czar of Russia and the King of Prussia that they would observe the Berlin Decree. His conquered foes

were forced reluctantly to do as the French emperor demanded.

Since Napoleon had been made emperor, France had left the ideas of the Revolution far behind. In those terrible days, you remember, all titles were done away with, and every one, whatever his or her rank, was addressed as "citizen" or "citizeness."

But when Napoleon became great he bestowed titles on the members of his own family, to whom he was always kind, as well as on many of his brave soldiers.

Joseph, his eldest brother, was made King of Naples, while Louis, a younger one, received the crown of Holland. His soldiers were rewarded for their services not only by higher rank in the army, but by having bestowed on them the title of prince or duke.

Sometimes, as you have read, Napoleon made war for no other reason than that he wished to increase his own power and win new kingdoms for France.

When, however, in 1807 he declared war against Spain and Portugal, he said it was because, in defiance of the Berlin Decree, these countries had allowed British goods to enter their lands.

Portugal was easily taken by the French, while the King of Spain was forced to resign his crown. Napoleon then said that his brother Joseph should sit on the throne of Spain.

But the Spaniards refused to have a foreigner to rule over them. In their pride and indignation they rose and massacred every Frenchman they could, and declared they would fight to the death rather than have a foreign king sitting upon the Spanish throne.

As they could not fight alone against so powerful a nation as France, they appealed to England for help. This was the beginning of the Peninsular War, which did not end until the fall of the great Napoleon.

England answered the appeal of the Spanish people by

sending to their help an army under the Duke of Wellington, who was then Sir Arthur Wellesley.

In 1809 fresh troops were sent to Spain under Sir John Moore, who was killed at the battle of Corunna, as you will remember reading in your English history.

Meanwhile in this same year another desperate battle was fought against the Austrians at Wagram, on the banks of the Danube.

The French took pains to conceal their movements before the battle, so that the enemy should not know at what point of the river or at what time they intended to cross.

One night, when the wind blew hard and the sky was dark, the emperor ordered his men to cross the river silently by a bridge formed of boats. While the French army was crossing, cannons were fired in another direction, and the Austrians believed that they would be attacked from the same direction as that from which the firing was heard.

Instead of this, the French fell from quite another quarter upon the white-coats, as the Austrians were often called from the color of their uniforms, and they were defeated.

The Austrian emperor had suffered so many defeats that he was now in dire straits, and forced to accept whatever terms Napoleon should be pleased to offer.

Perhaps harder than yielding up a large part of his dominions, as the French emperor demanded, was the other condition, that he should give his daughter, Marie Louise, in marriage to his conqueror.

Napoleon was now in sight of the fulfillment of another of his ambitions, which was to marry the daughter of an emperor.

Josephine, whom he had loved, was to be put aside that he might satisfy his desire.

She had, as you know, helped her husband by her beauty and her conversation, and he had never cared greatly for any other woman. Yet now, so greatly was his ambition set on

marrying the daughter of an emperor, Josephine was sent away.

Some time after the wedding, in March 1811, Marie Louise had a little son, and Napoleon, who had long wished for a child to succeed to the throne of France, was full of joy. The little baby was at once proclaimed King of Rome, for all Italy was now in the hands of the French emperor.

CHAPTER LXXXI

THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

In the autumn of 1812 Napoleon, having again quarreled with the Czar, marched into Russia with his grand army. At the beginning of the campaign he had four hundred thousand troops at his disposal.

As he advanced the Russian army fell back, destroying the towns through which they passed and burning the villages, so that the French might find neither shelter nor food awaiting them on their march.

At length, in the month of September, after many skirmishes had taken place and Smolensk had been reduced to ashes, the French found their enemy near a village named Borodino. Here a great battle, lasting twelve hours, was fought, both sides suffering enormous losses. Not fewer than seventy thousand men were killed or wounded.

But the Russian generals were not discouraged. They knew that winter was drawing near, and that erelong snow and frost would fight for them against the invaders. The army was therefore ordered to withdraw and leave Napoleon free to march on to Moscow.

When at length the French entered the capital they found it strangely deserted. They had toiled along in hope of food and shelter in the Holy City, and when it came in sight they had shouted for joy, "Moscow! Moscow!" But when they entered it, it was silent as a city of the dead. Only the wounded, the aged, the prisoners, had remained to receive the enemy.

Before the French had been in the city more than an hour

or two, fire broke out in different parts of the town. The Russians had destroyed the fire-engines before they left, so that the French found it wellnigh impossible to put out the flames.

In spite of disappointment and discomfort the French troops found that the forsaken houses held much that they might plunder.

They spread themselves over the city, ransacking wardrobes and cupboards. Little food was to be found, but there were plenty of gay garments in which the excited soldiers clad themselves.

In the cellars, too, there was a plentiful supply of wine, and so they feasted and drank until at length they were worn out and fell fast asleep.

As they slept the cry of fire arose once more. A strong wind was now blowing, and as most of the buildings were of wood the flames soon spread in every direction, and it was plain that the city was doomed.

For two days Napoleon watched the flames, and only when urged by his officers to forsake so dangerous a place would he leave his quarters.

The Russian campaign had as yet brought little glory to Napoleon. He had, it is true, won some victories, but he had paid for them dearly in the loss of men.

And now, as he watched Moscow being burned to the ground, the great general began to feel that his plans were going awry.

Winter was coming on, the Russian army refused to fight, so Napoleon wrote to the Czar to propose terms of peace favorable to Russia.

The Emperor Alexander refused to listen. He believed that he had but to wait, and soon snow and frost would drive the invader out of his land, and with heavier loss than the French deemed possible.

It was already October when Napoleon determined to order the retreat from Moscow.

For Russia the winter was meanwhile unusually mild, and at first the French army struggled along bravely, although the country through which it had to march was utterly desolate and little or no food was anywhere to be found.

The army had set out laden with the spoils that it had gathered at Moscow, but as the weather grew colder and colder, and as it grew weak for want of food, the road was strewn with the treasures the soldiers dropped by the way.

By November the army was within three days' march of Smolensk, where it hoped to find shelter and provisions.

But now the snow began to fall in great blinding flakes, while the wind rose whirling them hither and thither, so that soon the soldiers' eyes grew dazzled. Before them stretched naught save an endless desert of snow.

Shivering with cold, without so much as a crust of black bread, many of the men fell by the way. Nor did their comrades dare to linger by their side, lest they too should share their fate and perish in the storm.

To add to the horror of the march, the enemy now began to hang upon the rear of the French army, or to fall upon those who had wandered from the road.

Fierce dogs, too, prowled about, feeding on the bodies of those who had fallen, yelping hungrily for more victims when their horrid meal was ended.

Onward, still onward, pressed the miserable army. Reaching Smolensk, it rested for a few days before pushing on toward the river Dnieper, which at length loomed into sight. Across its frozen waters the soldiers marched, those who crossed last, however, being attacked by the Russians.

Encouraged by General Ney, one of Napoleon's bravest officers, the rearguard, in spite of its weakness, fought its way through the enemy's ranks and succeeded in rejoining Napoleon, who was with the main body of the army.

Before the French reached the next river, the ice had begun to thaw. The Beresina was usually a small, harmless stream, but now it was in flood, blocked, too, with half-thawed ice.

When Napoleon reached the bank, it was to find that the bridge by which he had counted on crossing the river was in the hands of the Russians.

Despair gripped the hearts of the wretched soldiers and showed upon their faces, but the emperor's face was immovable, his will as iron.

Orders were given that two light bridges should be built and thrown across the Beresina. The men worked desperately, the bridges being their one hope of escape, and soon they were ready and safely placed in position.

On 26th November a large number of soldiers crossed the hastily made bridges in safety. But on the following day the Russian army arrived at the bank of the river and placed its cannon so as to command the bridges.

In despair, those miserable soldiers who were still on the farther side of the river, hampered now by desperate stragglers and camp-followers, attempted to cross the bridges, only to be slain by the fast-flying shot and shell of the enemy.

So great was the rush for the bridges that at length one of them gave way. Then terrible cries arose from those who were plunged into the icy waters beneath, to be drowned or shot by the enemy.

When it was seen that one bridge was gone, a general stampede was made for the other.

Many finding it impossible to reach the bridge, threw themselves into the water to try to swim to the other side. But there were few who were not crushed to death by the ice-floes or frozen to death by the cold.

On the 29th, while still many of the French remained on the farther bank, the order was given to set fire to the bridge, that the enemy might not be able to cross the river.

Then those French folk who were left helpless on the other side, uttering piercing cries, threw themselves into the river, while the Russians from the banks shot, without ceasing, at the struggling mass. It was a miserable remnant of Napoleon's grand army that at length reached a town in Poland, where it could have food and shelter. From twenty to twenty-five thousand had lost their lives at the river of Beresina. Thus ended the terrible retreat from Moscow.

CHAPTER LXXXII

NAPOLEON IS BANISHED TO ELBA

NAPOLEON left his army on the frontiers of Poland and drove away with all possible haste to Paris, where the true story of the retreat from Moscow had only just become known, for all news of disaster the emperor kept from the capital as long as was possible.

The misfortune of the Grand Army had been due entirely to the weather, said the emperor, and he seemed to be undisturbed by the great loss of life that had reduced his army to a mere handful of men. He was, indeed, no sooner in Paris than he began to assemble a new army. Every lad of sixteen, in either France or Italy, who could handle a gun was forced to become a recruit.

When this new army was ready, the emperor once again marched against his foes. Prussia had now joined Russia against the great French general. The Prussians were led by Blücher, an old soldier seventy years of age. Blücher loved his country well, and longed, by a glorious victory, to wipe from her annals the disgrace of the defeat of Jena.

Two great battles took place near Dresden, and Napoleon forced the allied army to retreat. He himself then hastened to Leipzig, where he could easily keep in touch with France.

Here, in October 1813, a great battle called the "Battle of the Nations" was fought.

For four days the tide of war ebbed and flowed, now the French, now the allied army seemed to be on the point of winning the victory. But at length the struggle ended, the French being defeated and driven back into the town. Here

their supply of ammunition came to an end, and there was nothing left for them to do save retreat, and that in face of the foe.

Along a narrow bridge the French army took its way. But by some fatal mistake the bridge was blown up while the men were still crossing. Again disaster had befallen the French. Thousands of soldiers were drowned, thousands were captured by the enemy.

Then the power of the great French emperor quickly began to wane.

Country after country threw off its allegiance to France. Holland, as also the states of Germany, drove the French out of their land, while Lord Wellington triumphed in the Peninsula.

After the defeat of Leipzig Napoleon had hastened to Paris. A month later the allies offered him humiliating terms of peace. When these were scornfully refused by the emperor, the Prussian, Russian, and Austrian armies marched into France.

Napoleon tried to raise a new army, but so many soldiers had perished on the battlefield that this was now no easy matter.

Against the advancing foe Napoleon at last led an army indeed, but one composed chiefly of raw recruits. Even thus the genius of Napoleon wrested victory from his enemies in four pitched battles.

At length the allied forces succeeded in eluding the French general. Unawares, they slipped away and marched straight on Paris.

The National Guards fought bravely to defend the capital, but they were soon overpowered, and the city surrendered to the enemy in March 1814.

As the victorious generals rode through the streets of Paris the people shouted gladly, "Long live the Emperor Alexander! Down with the tyrant!" for they knew that Napoleon was selfish and cared little for them or their needs

so that he might satisfy his own ambitions. Even the statues which had been erected in his honor were pulled down and trampled upon by the excited mob.

Meanwhile Napoleon, finding that the enemy had escaped, followed toward Paris, only to hear, on reaching Fontainebleau, a few miles distant, that the capital had surrendered.

Thus the mighty empire which Napoleon had reared in a few years had fallen to pieces in a few months. Even Paris was no longer his.

The great emperor saw that there was nothing he could do save give up his crown.

"The allied Powers," wrote Napoleon, "having declared that the emperor was the sole obstacle to the reëstablishment of peace in Europe, the emperor, faithful to his oaths, declares that he renounces, for himself and his heirs, the thrones of France and Italy, and that there is no sacrifice, not even that of life, which he is not ready to make for the interest of France."

After his abdication the allies made Napoleon King of Elba, a little island in the Mediterranean Sea.

Before he left France he called his troops together to bid them farewell.

The Old Guards, who had so often followed Napoleon to victory, shed tears at the thought of losing their general. As he saw their tears, their leader bent forward and kissed the Eagle of France which was on their standards. Then, turning away, he left them, to journey to the island to which he was exiled.

CHAPTER LXXXIII

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

When Napoleon had been banished to Elba, the brother of Louis XVI., who had been living in exile in England, was recalled and proclaimed King of France.

The little son of Louis XVI., although he had never reigned, had sometimes been called Louis XVII., so the new king was given the title of Louis XVIII.

As you would expect, the Royalists were delighted to welcome a Bourbon to the throne, but the soldiers were still loyal to Napoleon. When they saw their new king, who was old and fat, and fond of eating and drinking, they longed for the old days to come again, when their great general was the ruler of France.

Violets, which had always been a badge of the Bonapartes, were handed from one old soldier to another, while they whispered, "He will come to us with the spring."

And they were right, for, tired of his little island kingdom, Napoleon determined to return to France. He set sail from Elba in February 1815 with ten hundred and fifty troops, resolved to stake all on one great adventure.

Landing on French soil, the general hastened to Grenoble with his miniature army. Here there was a garrison of his old troops.

At first, when they saw Napoleon, they showed no great eagerness to join him. Perhaps they were afraid of the result if they proved disloyal to Louis XVIII.

The officer, who was a Royalist, ordered his men to shoot the daring exile. But the order was not obeyed.

"Soldiers," then cried Napoleon, throwing open his coat, "here is your emperor! if any one wishes to kill me he can do so."

His voice acted as a spell, thrilling the troops and awakening their old devotion. "Long live the emperor!" they cried again and again, as they stepped over to join the ranks of those who followed him.

As Napoleon marched toward Paris, town after town, village after village, forgot their allegiance to Louis XVIII. and sent their soldiers to follow the general they had loved so well in other days.

Even Marshal Ney, who had been sent by the Government to capture the outlaw and had promised "to bring the Corsican to Paris in an iron cage," no sooner saw his old general than he forgot his promise, and with all his troops joined Napoleon.

Louis XVIII. was not brave enough to fight for his throne against the hero of the people. He fled from Paris in the middle of the night, while Napoleon reached the capital and was carried by the soldiers in triumph to the Tuileries.

The short time during which Napoleon again ruled France was known as the "Hundred Days."

The emperor knew that the princes of Europe would soon be up in arms and ready to march against him.

With all his old energy he made up his mind not to await the enemy. Taking with him as large an army as he had been able to muster, he set out, to find the English under Lord Wellington, the Iron Duke, encamped on the field of Waterloo near Brussels.

Here, on June 18, 1815, Napoleon also took up his position, hoping to fight the English before the Prussians under General Blücher had come to their aid.

On the evening before the battle rain had fallen, and still in the early morning it had not ceased. When the battle began, about twelve o'clock, the fields of Waterloo were wet and slippery.

Again and again the French cavalry charged the English infantry, which was drawn up in solid squares, but still the English stood firm.

"Will those English never show us their backs?" cried the emperor impatiently, as he saw how they still stood unflinching before the tremendous onslaught of his men.

"I fear they will be cut to pieces first," answered one of his generals.

Blücher, meanwhile, was hastening to join the Iron Duke as quickly as muddy roads and heavy cannon would allow. But with all his haste, it was four o'clock before Wellington heard the welcome sound of distant cannon and knew that the Prussians were approaching.

Napoleon also knew that the Prussians could not now be far away, and he resolved on one more desperate charge before Blücher arrived.

His Old Guards, whom hitherto he had kept in reserve, were ordered to advance. But the English met them with so fierce a fire that even these hardy veterans hesitated and fell back in confusion.

The English seized their chance and, charging in among them, drove Napoleon's Old Guards in triumph from the field.

Wellington then advanced with his whole army, and before this terrible onslaught the entire French army turned and fled.

Napoleon knew that the day was over, that victory would not be his.

"All is lost," he cried, "save himself who can," and he galloped from the field.

Blücher and his troops arrived in time to follow the fugitive French army. No mercy was shown by the Prussians, who overtook and killed many hundreds of Frenchmen before they could reach a place of safety.

Napoleon went sadly back to Paris, knowing that the "Sun of Austerlitz" was set for ever. The fickle Parisians,

angry at the loss of so many of their soldiers, turned the defeated general out of the city, while orders reached him to leave France. Every port, however, was guarded by a British man-of-war: escape was impossible; and so, exactly a hundred days after he had landed so confidently in France, Napoleon gave himself up a prisoner to the captain of the British ship *Bellerophon.*

The princes of Europe made up their minds that Napoleon should again be banished, and he was sent to the rocky island of St. Helena, in the Atlantic Ocean. From this lonely spot he could not easily escape, and to make it the more impossible, guards were placed on the island to watch his movements and to read his letters, lest he should ask his friends to help him to return to France.

For over six long years the great general remained a prisoner on the island of St. Helena. On the 5th of May 1821 he died.

As he lay dying a great storm passed over the island. The thunder crashed and the lightning flashed. Then Napoleon raised himself slightly and opened his eyes.

It was surely the noise of cannon that he heard, for looking around, as though for his soldiers, he murmured, "France, army, the head of the army, Josephine." Then, sinking back on his pillows, the great man closed his eyes for the last time.

"I desire that my ashes may repose on the banks of the Seine, in the midst of the French people I have loved so well," Napoleon had written in his will.

Nineteen years after his death his wish was fulfilled, his body being brought to France and laid to rest in a beautiful tomb in Paris.

After Napoleon had been banished to St. Helena, Louis XVIII. had returned to claim his crown. He was allowed to sit upon the throne of France, but he was never able to gain the love of his people.

In 1824 he died, saying with his last breath to his brother

Charles, who would succeed him, "The Charter is the best inheritance I can leave you."

This was the Charter of French Liberties which Louis XVIII. had signed and promised to uphold when he ascended the throne of France.

CHAPTER LXXXIV

THE REVOLUTION OF JULY

One of the first acts of the new king, Charles X., was to disregard the Charter of French Liberties, which his brother had begged him to respect.

The people of France were proud of their free press, that is, of their right to publish what any one had written without the interference of the Government.

But the ministers of Charles X. thought this a dangerous liberty, and persuaded the king to make a new law, by which all pamphlets and books had to be seen and approved by Government before they were printed.

This new law, which touched one of the liberties which their Charter had won for them, made the people very angry. They showed their indignation by wandering about the streets of Paris shouting, "Long live the Charter! Down with the Ministers!"

Charles, finding that the National Guards were on the side of the people, dismissed them, and also forbade the Chambers of Deputies to assemble.

In 1829 Charles, whom his subjects nicknamed "the Simple," chose for his chief ministers three men who were bitterly disliked by the Parisians.

One of these had been a friend of Marie Antoinette, and had been known as an aristocrat at the time of the great Revolution.

Not only in Paris but throughout France there was much discontent at the king's choice. Charles, however,

having chosen his ministers, was determined to keep them.

Lest the mob should dare to rise and show their displeasure, the king sent troops under General Marmont into the city to keep order.

But the mob paid no heed to the troops. It hastened to the cathedral and rang the bells with all its strength to call the citizens to arms.

Then, as was its wont, it pulled up pavements, cut down trees that grew along the sides of the streets, and put up great barricades.

As the troops marched along the streets, stones were hurled at them from the windows, boiling water too was poured over them, and this strange kind of warfare disturbed the soldiers more than a fierce fire of shot and shell would have done.

In spite of Marmont's efforts to keep his men loyal to the king, many of them deserted and joined the mob.

Thus encouraged by the soldiers, the people hastened to the Louvre and the Tuileries, and rushing into these beautiful palaces they broke the furniture and statues to pieces and flung them recklessly into the river Seine.

This revolution, for such it really was, lasted for three days, and was called "The three glorious days of July 1830."

The king had gone off hunting before the outbreak of the mob.

When he heard how they had behaved, he thought it was time to pacify them, and he determined to dismiss the ministers whom they so disliked.

But, as many a Bourbon king before him had done, Charles had delayed until it was too late. The citizens of Paris—and Paris meant France—had made up their minds that they would no longer allow Charles X. to be their king. So he was deposed, and the crown was offered to his cousin, the Duke of Orleans.

Louis Philippe, son of that disloyal Duke of Orleans

who had voted for the death of Louis XVI., now became king. He was not like his father, being a good man and a brave soldier.

At the time of the Revolution Louis Philippe had fled from France. Being well educated, he had earned his living by teaching in a school in Switzerland, and had even wandered so far as North America.

The new sovereign wished to rule as a "citizen king," chosen by the voice of the people. He promised faithfully to guard the Charter of French Liberties.

But Louis Philippe had little chance to rule his kingdom well. For already, when he came to the throne, his people were split up into at least three parties, each of which bitterly disliked the other.

There were the king's own friends, there were those who thought the grandson of Charles X. should be on the throne, and worst of all, there were Democrats or Red Republicans who could not bear to think that a Bourbon was again upon the throne of France.

The Democrats belonged to a secret society which employed much of its time in plotting against the king's life.

Once, as Louis Philippe drove up to review his troops, one of the members of the secret society fired at the royal carriage.

The king escaped, but some of his officers were killed, as well as a few of the people who had gathered round the king's coach.

After Louis Philippe had reigned for six years the plots of Louis Napoleon, a nephew of the great Napoleon, began to attract as much attention as the schemes of the Democrats. More than once he was discovered trying to make the soldiers of the French army rebel against their king. At length he was arrested and put in prison, but he managed to escape. Disguised as a workman, he fled to London.

Meanwhile the ministers chosen by the king were almost as much disliked as had been those of Charles X.

Guizot and Thiers, both of them great historians, were the names of the ministers Louis Philippe had chosen to help him govern France.

In one of the histories written by Guizot, you will like to know that I have found many of the stories which I have told you in this book.

But though both Guizot and Thiers were wise and learned, the mob hated them. Again they began to wander along the streets of Paris crying, "Down with the Ministers! Long live Reform!"

The troops were ordered to scatter the mob. By some accident a gun was fired from a window and wounded a soldier, whereupon the troops poured a volley into the crowd and injured about fifty people.

As you may imagine, this roused the fury of the mob. It hurriedly ran up barricades all over the city, and vowed to take vengeance on the ministers.

Guizot then resigned, thinking thus to appease the anger of the people. Thiers, left alone, attempted to carry out reforms that would satisfy them, but in vain. Nothing would satisfy the country save that Louis Philippe should cease to be king.

So in February 1848 Louis Philippe quietly gave up his crown and went to live in England, where a year later he died.

France had grown weary of kings. She now determined that the country should again become a republic.

CHAPTER LXXXV

THE BRAVE ARCHBISHOP

As you have read, the Parisians, fickle as they were, were never long without a hero whom they worshiped.

When their country now, for the second time, became a republic, Lamartine was the idol of the day, and accordingly he became the leader of the new Government.

Lamartine, who was a poet and an orator, was also a brave man. After the abdication of Louis Philippe he faced the excited mob, and spent more than three days trying to soothe its angry passions. Until the city was quiet he did not dare to snatch time either for food or sleep, but at length his eloquence prevailed and the people went away peaceably to their homes.

France was again a republic. Yet the Democrats were still dissatisfied.

Work was hard to find, people were starving. The Democrats would fain have seen the rich forced to divide their money and their goods with the poor.

Even the Tricolor, which now waved from all the public buildings, gave these Republicans no joy. They longed to see the red flag, the badge of the fiercest Democrats, hoisted all over France.

When the mob again rose, clamoring that the red flag should replace the Tricolor, Lamartine would not yield an inch to the voice of the people.

"Citizens," he said, and there was no quaver of uncertainty in his voice, "Citizens, neither I nor any member of the Government will adopt the red flag. We would rather

adopt that other flag which is hoisted in a bombarded city to mark to the enemy the hospitals of the wounded." The flag of which Lamartine spoke was that of the Red Cross.

"I will tell you," he went on, "in one word why I will oppose the red flag. It is, citizens, because the Tricolor has made the tour of the world with the republic and the empire, with your liberties and your glory; the red flag has only made the tour of the Champ de Mars, dragged through the blood of citizens."

Brave words these to speak in the face of an angry mob! But by such words, and also because the Parisians were nothing if not fickle, Lamartine soon began to lose his hold upon the people, his popularity began to wane.

The second republic had been proclaimed in February 1848; by June the people had become so dissatisfied that again they were up in arms, and street-fighting grew daily more dangerous. At length the Government ordered General Cavaignac, the Minister of War, to take troops and clear the streets.

For three days a terrible slaughter followed, the troops finding the mob armed and desperate.

At the end of three days the heart of the Archbishop of Paris could no longer bear to see the sufferings of his flock. Going to General Cavaignac he begged to be allowed to go to the headquarters of the rebels.

His wish was granted, and the brave archbishop set out, carrying in his hand naught save a cross.

Many of the soldiers, believing he was going to certain death, begged him to return. But he refused, saying, "It is my duty. A good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

It was evening when the holy man reached the spot where the battle was raging.

"Holding the cross aloft," he went toward the foot of the barricade, a servant carrying before him a green branch, at that time the sign of truce.

The soldiers drew close to the archbishop as he approached

the mob. Even with the man of God standing between them, the two parties scowled fiercely upon one another.

Suddenly, from an unknown quarter, a shot was fired. Without pausing to find out who had fired, the rebels, shouting, "Treason! treason!" sped back to their guns, and the fight was soon raging as fiercely as ever.

Undismayed, the archbishop walked slowly toward the barricade which the rebels had set up. As he reached the top a storm of balls swept over his head, yet he, as by a miracle, was untouched.

Slowly he began to descend, meaning to join the rebels on the other side. But at that moment a chance shot from a window struck him and he fell to the ground.

Then in horror the rebels laid down their arms, and staunching his wound they carried the brave archbishop to the hospital.

He lived only for a few moments. With his last breath he cried, "O God, accept my life as an offering for the salvation of this poor misguided people!"

After the archbishop's death the rebels offered to surrender on condition of a general pardon. But General Cavaignac refused to accept any condition, so again the rebels flew to arms. Many thousands of them lost their lives.

When at length peace was restored to the city, the Chamber of Deputies determined to have a president at the head of the republic. The president was to be chosen by the vote of the people.

Their choice was unexpected. Lamartine, being no longer their idol, was set aside. General Cavaignac, who had served his city bravely, was ignored. But Louis Napoleon, the nephew of the great Napoleon, who had been forced to fly from France during the reign of Louis Philippe, was now chosen to be the President of the French Republic.

If the people dreamed that the nephew of Napoleon would be content with the title of President, they soon found out their mistake.

Three years after his election, in 1851, he made secret arrangements to become emperor. As Napoleon's little son had sometimes been called Napoleon II., Louis determined to call himself Napoleon III.

That neither the minister Thiers nor General Cavaignac might thwart his plans, Louis Napoleon ordered them to be imprisoned. He then caused placards to be posted all over Paris, saying, not that he intended to be emperor, but that he meant to remain president of the republic for ten years.

The mob, indignant with the president's ambition, flew to arms. But Louis Napoleon was prepared for this. His soldiers had received orders to patrol the streets and shoot all those who would not agree to his plan.

A sudden stroke of policy such as this by which Louis Napoleon became master of France, is called a *coup d'état.* Before another year had passed Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état* had proved so successful that he was proclaimed emperor by the vote of the people.

In the following year—1853—a great war broke out between Russia and Turkey. France and England sided with Turkey, and this was the beginning of the Crimean War.

To tell you of this war makes our story seem very near its close, for we still read in the newspapers of old soldiers who fought in this great campaign and yet are alive to-day.

CHAPTER LXXXVI

THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL

In this book you have often read of the wars between France and England. But in the Crimean War, of which I am going to tell you now, France and England fought side by side against Russia.

Nicholas, the Russian emperor, was full of ambition and wished to add to his already large dominions. Turkey was near enough to tempt him.

Now, while along the south Russia touches the Black Sea, half of the shore at least belonged to Turkey, and she, if she chose, had the right to forbid ships of other nations to enter. This added to the emperor's desire to seize part of Turkey's dominions. He wished himself to have control of the Black Sea.

France and England determined to protect Turkey, and in any case they were resolved that Russia should not become more powerful than she already was.

The allied French and English armies met at Varna, a town near the mouth of the Danube, and sailed across to the Crimea, a little peninsula in the Black Sea.

Marshal St. Arnaud commanded the French army, Lord Raglan the English.

Sebastopol was the chief seaport of Russia, and here a great arsenal had been built, in which the Russians made and stored their weapons. It was this important town which the allied armies determined to besiege.

The Russian winters, as you remember, were terribly severe, and soon both the French and English were suffering

from the intense cold, as well as from hunger and a dreadful disease called cholera.

In the English camp the sick soldiers were nursed by Florence Nightingale. So gentle she was, so kind, that the men often forgot their pain and the terrible hardships they had to endure. Before long the roughest soldiers learned to love this sweet woman, who, when she could not bring healing to their bodies, yet brought ease and comfort to their home-sick hearts. They even grew content if only her shadow might fall upon them as she passed quietly from bed to bed.

For more than a year Sebastopol was besieged, and though the allied armies had not taken the town, they held the fortress of Balaclava, which was situated on the south side of the city.

It was here that the famous Charge of the Light Brigade took place, of which you have often read in your English history.

One day, when the Russians were making a desperate effort to wrest Balaclava from the enemy, Lord Raglan sent a message to the officer of the cavalry regiment of the Light Brigade, ordering him to take the Russian batteries.

It was plain that a mistake had been made, for to charge the Russian guns was certain death. Yet with dauntless courage the officer and his six hundred men rode straight forward, in the face of a tremendous storm of fire.

Nor was the fire only in front.

"Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them,
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred."

Through that awful fire the English soldiers forced their

way, silenced the Russian guns and slew the Russian gunners.

Then began the terrible ride back through the narrow pathway, now as before riddled with shot and shell.

Of the six hundred that had set out so bravely, only a handful returned from the "jaws of death."

"Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them,
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred."

Soon after this the Emperor Nicholas died. People believed that disappointment had made him ill and that, as his army was defeated again and again, he did not care to live.

However that may be, the war did not end when Nicholas died, for his son Alexander II. still carried it on.

At length the allied troops made a last determined attack upon the town they had so long besieged. Although they did not succeed in taking it, they drove the Russians from their strongest positions, so that it became impossible for the defenders to hold the city. They therefore set fire to the town and escaped from the burning citadel.

Soon after this the war ended, and peace was signed at Paris in 1856. By the Treaty of Paris the rights of Turkey were secured, and no vessels of war were allowed to enter the Black Sea, save only a number of coastguard ships belonging to Russia and Turkey.

CHAPTER LXXXVII

"THE MAN OF SEDAN"

Louis Napoleon inherited something of his uncle's love of war.

Three years after the Peace of Paris he crossed the Alps into Italy to help the Italian king to drive the Austrians out of his kingdom. After winning several brilliant victories he went back to France.

In 1866 war broke out between Prussia and Austria.

Prussia won many battles, and under her chief minister, Count Bismarck, became so powerful that Louis Napoleon grew jealous.

For this reason and because also of Bismarck's falsification of the famous telegram of Ems, the French Emperor declared war against Prussia in 1870.

He found that it was not only against Prussia that he would have to fight, but against all the German states, who at once sent troops to the help of their countrymen in Prussia.

With the German troops marched William, King of Prussia, his son the Crown Prince, as well as Count Bismarck.

Napoleon III., with his son the Prince Imperial, joined his army on the Rhine.

About two and a half miles beyond the boundary of France lay the small town of Saarbrücken. Here the first shot between the two armies was fired by the young Prince Imperial. Louis Napoleon sent a telegram to the mother of the prince, the beautiful Empress Eugenie,

to tell her that her son had received his "baptism of fire."

Again and again the Germans defeated the French; in one battle, indeed, two French regiments were entirely destroyed.

At length, in September 1871, the two armies met at Sedan, where the last and most terrible battle in this campaign was fought.

The French army had marched into a valley, under the walls of Sedan. "It was there," says Victor Hugo, a well-known French writer, "no one could guess what for, without order, without discipline, a mere crowd of men, waiting, as it seemed, to be seized by an immensely powerful hand. It seemed to be under no particular anxiety. The men who composed it knew, or thought they knew, that the enemy was far away.

"The valley was one of those which the great Emperor Napoleon used to call a 'bowl.' No place could have been better calculated to shut in an army. Its very numbers were against it. Once in, if the way out were blocked, it could never leave it again."

The night before the battle the French army slept, and while it slept the German army was creeping steadily and noiselessly nearer and yet nearer to Sedan, silently making sure that no outlet from the valley was left unguarded.

Not a sound disturbed the slumberers in the French camp. But in the morning when they awoke, a strange sight made them rub their eyes and look again to see if they were still dreaming.

There, on the heights above them, looking down into the valley, the French had seen what looked like a dense mass of soldiers.

Two hundred and fifty thousand soldiers! In the night they had come, as stealthily and as silently as serpents, and the French army was held fast, a prisoner.

What Napoleon III. thought when he saw the trap in which he was caught, we do not know.

The French fought with courage, but the German guns seemed to send volleys of shot and shell into the valley from every point of the compass. The battle was speedily changed into a massacre.

When at length the terrible day drew to a close, the emperor sent a note to the King of Prussia.

"MONSIEUR MON FRÈRE,—Not having been able to die in the midst of my troops, it only remains for me to place my sword in the hands of your Majesty.—I am, Your Majesty's good brother, NAPOLEON."

Thus did the French emperor give himself up as a prisoner of war, while about eighty-three thousand troops were forced to surrender to the Germans.

A meeting was then arranged between Napoleon III. and Count Bismarck, in a château on the banks of the river Meuse.

It was a beautiful autumn day when the meeting took place, and chairs were brought that Napoleon and the minister might sit out of doors.

The emperor, as was natural, seemed tired and dejected, although he was treated courteously by the count. King William of Prussia also drove to the château to greet his great prisoner.

When Paris heard of the surrender of her army she was very angry with Napoleon, "the Man of Sedan," as the people named him.

The mob rose as usual when it was displeased, and rushing into the Assembly Hall declared that it would no longer have an emperor to rule over the country. France should again be a republic.

But it was not until the German armies had besieged Paris and forced her, after terrible sufferings, to come to

terms, that, in March 1871, Napoleon III. was solemnly deposed.

Louis Napoleon being then set free by the Germans, hastened to England, where he died in January 1873.

Monsieur Thiers, the historian, was now proclaimed President of the Third French Republic.

But the Democrats were indignant that any terms had been made with the Germans. They shut the gates of Paris and refused to allow the new president to enter the city.

These rebellious citizens were called Communists as well as Red Republicans or Democrats. They declared that rich and poor should share all they possessed in common.

While Paris was in the hands of the Communists law and order ceased to exist. It was not safe for any one to be seen in the streets. They might at once be suspected of favoring law and order, in which case they would either at once be killed or thrust into prison.

For their beautiful city the mob had no respect.

It destroyed the famous palace of the Tuileries and tore down a monument which had been made of cannon captured from the enemy by Napoleon I. It even set fire to the city itself.

For nearly two months the terrible reign of the Communists lasted. By the end of that time Thiers had assembled the regular army, and the Government troops were ordered to take Paris out of the hands of the rebels.

The army forced its way into the city, and after a desperate fight the Communists were overpowered. Hundreds of them were punished with death, while many hundreds more were sent abroad to the colonies. So at length peace was restored to Paris, and President Thiers was able to rule the country.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII

THE THIRD REPUBLIC

ADOLPHE THIERS, the first President of the Third Republic, was an able historian, and a man of sterling character.

He was trusted by the people, who knew that he was honest and patriotic. He was a very industious man, and generally rose at five o'clock in summer and six in winter.

He had already had a long experience in public life, had held high offices, and been in prison and in exile. His studies especially fitted him for the position of President at this time.

France was suffering from her defeat in the Franco-Prussian war. The victorious Germans had taken away two of her best-loved provinces, Alsace and Lorraine, and had forced her to pay them five billion francs.

Besides that, the Germans left a part of their army in France, to stay until they had collected all this money. It was very hard for the sensitive and proud French people to endure the presence of these German soldiers, who had won a victory over them.

The French, therefore, made every effort and sacrifice to gather the money with which to pay the Germans what they demanded, so that they would leave France and go back to their own country. They succeeded so well that the enormous sum was paid off much sooner than the Germans expected, and they were finally obliged to return to Germany.

This success was partly due to the wise administration of Monsieur Thiers; but even more it was due to the wonderful vitality and vigor and hopefulness of the French people.

Though their defeat in the Franco-Prussian war had mortified and crushed them, their honorable pride caused them to take courage, and work hard, and begin a new life. The French are always like that.

Monsieur Thiers, besides being a famous writer, was also a lover of beautiful things, and had a fine art collection in his home.

Madame Thiers was also fond of art. She was a good, kind woman, with a talent for thrifty housekeeping.

The Thiers family lived at Versailles, which had been made the capital of France, because the government feared the excitable people of Paris.

While Thiers was President, from 1871 to 1873, and was obliged to give elegant receptions and banquets at the Elysée Palace in Paris, Madame Thiers would drive in from Versailles with her sister and her servants, attend the banquet, and then carry home all the rich dishes that remained, to be eaten at the family table in Versailles. It should be remembered that the French President's salary was not then a large one, and the good lady was only doing her housewifely duty.

Thiers had been a monarchist in the past, and so the Republicans suspected him of wanting a king for France. But this was untrue and unjust.

Thiers had, in fact, realized that the time for having a king in his country was gone by. "The Republican form of government is that which divides us the least," he said. And when Prince Jerome Napoleon, cousin of Napoleon III., came back to France in order to try to restore the Empire again, Thiers had him arrested and sent out of the country. In fact, Thiers was a loyal Republican president, doing his duty honestly.

But political complications arose in the Assembly (which was then the parliament or congress of the Republic), and Thiers was forced to resign.

Marshal MacMahon, who was partly of Irish origin, and

was then sixty-five years old, was chosen as second President of the Republic in 1873.

MacMahon had been a brilliant officer in the Crimean and other wars under the Emperor Napoleon III. But in the Franco-Prussian war he had been a prisoner in Germany.

On the whole, he was not a really great general, but he was a brave and gallant soldier, unmoved by danger. A famous French writer has said of him, "His character was bright and spotless like his uniform."

MacMahon was an aristocrat; but he was a patriot and a soldier, he knew his duty to the Republic, and performed it like a man who keeps his word.

The President's term of service was now set at seven years.

Madame de MacMahon was a very distinguished and very charitable woman, belonging to a noble French family. She was a member of the French Red Cross, and personally collected money for works of charity even while her husband was president.

She was devoted to her children, and watched carefully over their education. Her husband, too, was very fond of children all his life. Once when he was entering in triumph the Italian city of Milan, after a successful battle, a little girl offered him a bouquet of flowers. He caught her up on his horse, and kept her there while he rode through the town, much to her surprise and delight.

But President MacMahon, too, was obliged to resign before his term of office had ended, because he could not agree with his council of Ministers about the treatment of army officers. MacMahon felt that he could not permit brave officers to be unjustly treated.

At the same time, he knew that he was being forced to resign, because the Republicans did not think that he was republican enough.

During MacMahon's administration, the new Constitution of the French Republic was adopted in 1875. This Constitu-

tion dissolved the National Assembly, and established the present Senate and Chamber of Deputies in its stead.

But this Constitution is far from being perfect for a Republic, as it was drawn up partly by men who wanted the return of a king to France. So it led to confusion, and resulted in taking practically all the power away from the President, and giving the real governing power to the Chamber of Deputies.

It is a matter of dispute among Frenchmen whether this is the wisest plan or not. However, it is doubtful whether it is wise to give too much power to the President of a Republic. Men are vain and fond of power, and may abuse it whether they are kings or presidents.

The next President was Monsieur Jules Grévy, who was elected in 1879. He was seventy-six years old, and had a great reputation for skill in parliamentary matters, and also for honesty.

He was a devoted Republican, and the mistakes he made were not selfish ones.

He was very fond of chess and billiards. He liked animals, and could sometimes be seen walking in the garden of his palace followed by a pet duck, which was certainly an unusual pet for a president.

Grévy was an excellent lawyer, well-to-do and cautious and clever. When he lived in his country home in the province of France called Jura, he would wear clothes like the peasants—a blouse, a wide straw hat, and wooden shoes called *sabots*. There he would wander around the fields with a gun, stopping sometimes to talk with farmers about their crops and their cattle.

While Grévy was president, news came of the death of the young Prince Imperial, Louis-Eugène Napoleon, only son of the former Emperor Napoleon III. and of the lovely Empress Eugénie.

As you know, the widowed Empress and her fair, blue-eyed slender son were living in exile in England. The prince

was then but twenty-two years old. He wished to join an English expedition against some savage black tribes in Africa, known as the Zulus. His wish was granted, and he started for Africa, being attached to the staff of Lord Chelmsford, and leaving his mother divided between her admiration and her fear lest he come to harm.

One day in Africa the Prince went ahead of the main army with a reconnoitering party consisting of six mounted soldiers, and a Zulu who pretended to be the friend of the white men.

When they had left the army about ten miles behind, the little company stopped to give their horses a rest. This was a country grown with high grasses, near Blood River.—It was strange that the name of the Prince's horse was "Fate."

Suddenly they were fired upon by the Zulus. The soldiers leapt into their saddles and fled as fast as they could, for they could not know how many Zulus were attacking them.

When they paused and looked back, they saw that the Zulu who had pretended to be their guide had vanished, and the Prince Imperial had not been able to mount owing to an accident to his saddle.

The fierce savages attacked the young Prince with their spears. He tried to defend himself, but at last he fell dead, with eighteen wounds in his body.

When he was brought back to England, the poor Empress Eugénie kissed and embraced his coffin, and sobbed, "This, then, is all that is left to me of my son."

So died the brave young descendant of Louis Napoleon, brother to the great Napoleon.

In Grévy's administration also occurred the death of two great Frenchmen, Léon Gambetta and Victor Hugo.

Gambetta was a politician and statesman of Italian origin, but a great French patriot, and one of the real founders of the Republic.

He was a fiery orator, and wielded a powerful influence

over the affairs of France. He died, greatly regretted, in his prime.

Victor Hugo was one of the greatest of France's poets and novelists and political writers. He wrote without ceasing, and produced an enormous amount of work. He was so much respected and loved, that his funeral procession in Paris was three miles long.

If you visit Paris you will see his house in the Place des Vosges, a museum now, where you will find very handsome pieces of furniture which this great poet made with his own hands.

During Grévy's presidency another interesting event occurred, with relation to the heirs of former kings of France.

The Count de Paris, the representative of the ancient Orleans line of French kings, gave a reception in his home in the Rue de Varennes, in Paris, in honor of the marriage of his daughter, which took place in Lisbon, Portugal.

Considering himself the rightful king of France, although France had been for some time a Republic, and really thinking only of his royal descent, he imprudently sent invitations to all the Ambassadors of foreign countries, just as he would have done had he truly been the reigning king.

This was an insult to the Republic, and of course the Ambassadors had too much sense to go to the reception. One of them told President Grévy of the astotnishing invitation he had received. So the Republic was compelled to act, and it acted very severely. A decree of banishment was issued against all the "pretenders" to the throne of France. All the titled members of the Bourbon and Orleans and Bonaparte families were compelled to leave their beloved France forever, under pain of being put into prison.

Though this was hard, yet it was wise, for there was always danger of trouble arising from the presence of these discontented princely members of the old royal and other ruling families of France.

Another very important event of Grévy's administration

occurred when education for children became free in France.

But Grévy also had to resign in 1887. This was owing to a scandal which involved his son-in-law, Monsieur Wilson, who lived with the President in the Elysée Palace. He was accused of taking advantage of his relationship to the President, and giving decorations and offices to people who had no right to them.

This scandal made the Parisians so indignant that there was danger of a revolution again. But the Military Governor declared that anybody who started trouble in the streets would be shot dead immediately, no matter who he was, and this firm action had a very good effect.

So a new President was elected. This was Monsieur Sadi Carnot, whose famous grandfather, Lazare Carnot, had rendered great services to the First French Republic.

Sadi Carnot was now fifty years old. He had been by profession a State Engineer, looking after the building of many roads and bridges. He had also invented a new machine-gun. Later on he had filled several important public positions.

When he became President, his father who was an active old gentleman of eighty-seven, went promptly to his son's house to offer his congratulations. The old gentleman said: "You are now head of the family, you are CARNOT. You need no longer use your Christian name. Sign your decrees Carnot, just Carnot."

The old gentleman was excessively proud of his son, and did not mind yielding place to him as head of the family, although he himself still lived.

While Carnot was President, France was sorely troubled. There was the notorious affair of General Boulanger, who was supposed to want to bring back a king or emperor, and destroy the Republic. Indeed, his most enthusiastic followers urged him to make himself king.

Boulanger was a brave general, and he became extraordinarily popular in the country. Many songs were written

about him, and these were sung in the music-halls and cafés and streets, and constantly increased popular affection for him.

Many Parisians were discontented with the Republic because of the scandals and political intrigues that so often occurred among inferior kinds of men. But, all the same, the Republic was growing stronger, and some men at least were trying to make it better year after year, and it seemed the happiest form of government for the people. All they needed were strong and honest leaders, in France as in every other country.

The Boulanger intrigue finally came to an end, and the General, after an exciting and troubled life, killed himself by the grave of the woman he loved, in Belgium, where he had been living in exile.

Meanwhile President Carnot was making an acceptable President, and the people were beginning to like him more and more. He used to make frequent journeys around France, delivering speeches here and there, and trying to make the people understand that he was doing his best for them.

But things were not going well. There was the great Panama scandal, for instance. This is such a famous affair that perhaps you would like to hear a few words about it.

A company was formed under Count Ferdinand de Lesseps, to dig a canal between North and South America, through the Isthmus of Panama. De Lesseps was a great French engineer who had successfully dug the Suez Canal between Asia and Africa. The Company, however, included some men who were not honest in money dealings. They spent much more money than they should have spent, and for a long time no one knew where it went. Some of it was said to have been used for bribes, and this led to many complications.

Finally the Company and many people who had bought its shares were ruined, and the canal was not dug. Poor

Count de Lesseps, whose honesty was not doubted by the majority of people, was heart-broken by the failure of his great plan, and finally died.

As you know, the Panama Canal was dug many years later by the United States of America.

Then, there were the anarchists who began to make trouble in various cities, including Paris. Bombs were exploded from time to time in Paris restaurants, killing innocent people, or anybody who happened to be around at the moment. Sometimes these anarchists were caught and put to death, or imprisoned; sometimes they escaped.

The Anarchists are people who do not believe in laws. We can imagine what the world would be like if we had no laws, and the anarchists had their way.

Sometimes they are people whose ideas are in certain ways noble, but generally they are men and women whose brains are not normal.

Now President Carnot had gone to the City of Lyons in June, to please the Lyons people by making a visit to the Colonial Exhibition then taking place there. He was received with the greatest enthusiasm, for the people liked him very much.

As he was driving in his carriage through the dense crowd in the streets, every one shouting gayly *"Vive la République! Vive Carnot!"*—which, as you know, means "Long live the Republic, long live Carnot!"—a young man rushed up to Carnot's side brandishing a paper in the air. People thought it was a petition for some favor which he intended to ask of the President, so nobody stopped him. But instead of handing the paper to the President, who was smiling and bowing to the crowd, he struck him a fierce blow.

There was a dagger inside the paper, and it entered more than four inches in poor Carnot's side. He bravely drew the weapon out of the wound, and threw it into the street. Then he said, "I am wounded," and fell back fainting.

Meanwhile, the murderer, who was an Italian, was caught

by the shocked and angry crowd, who would have lynched him if the police had not carried him off.

The good President died about three hours after he was wounded. His assassin was guillotined.

Carnot was buried with great ceremony in the beautiful Panthéon in Paris, near the grave of his famous grandfather, Lazare Carnot.

CHAPTER LXXXIX

GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY

CARNOT'S successor was Jean-Paul Casimir-Perier. He was a man of excellent family, rich and cultured. He had been a brilliant student, and a gallant officer in the Franco-Prussian war. Afterwards he held high positions in the government, and became Prime Minister.

But he did not care to be President. Carnot had requested him to be his successor if possible, but Casimir-Perier said no, that he was "a fighter, and born for fighting," and that as President he would not have enough freedom of action.

But everybody thought that France needed a strong-willed man like him, and they tried to persuade him to accept the position of President. His mother, who had great influence over him, begged him to accept, but he refused even her.

At last, however, one of his intimate friends, named Burdeau, who knew that he was so ill that he could not live much longer, begged Casimir-Perier to be President. "It is the request of a dying man," he said. Then Casimir-Perier yielded.

He was only forty-seven then, and was the youngest president France ever had. He had a fine military appearance and manner which gave him distinction.

His wife was one of the most elegant, accomplished and witty of Frenchwomen, which is high praise in a nation which includes so many charming women.

But the Casimir-Periers did not remain long in the Elysée Palace. The President found that his ministers did not tell

him about all the serious affairs of the nation. Facts were hidden from him, for instance, in the famous Dreyfus trial. This was the trial of a Jewish officer in the French army for treason. It is far too long and complicated for us to talk about here. But we should say that Dreyfus was never positively proven innocent. The affair, furthermore, caused great trouble in France for many years, and people disagreed fiercely on the subject of Dreyfus's guilt or innocence.

The President rightly felt that he should be told all the important acts of his ministers; and because he had not been told, he felt that he was placed in a false position, and might accidentally compromise the honor of France.

So, after being President only about six months, he suddenly resigned, to many people's surprise. But he had shown that he was not a man to be trifled with.

After he resigned, he used a large portion of his time and his fortune in the service of his people, helping consumptive children to be cured, improving the condition of the working classes, and aiding charities generally.

Later in his life he was offered the position of Minister of War, but he declined.

His successor was the son of a carpenter. This is the wonderful power of a republic, that all men of ability may rise to any public position, no matter how humble their birth.

The new President was François Félix Faure. His father, an honest carpenter and chair-maker, had come to Paris when he was twenty-five years old, to seek his fortune. But how he would have laughed if anybody had told him then that his son would one day be president!

He was a good workman, and soon found a situation with a master-joiner, and, probably because he was a tall, handsome fellow, and a good workman, he eventually married his master's daughter.

Their son Félix was well educated. He went over to England to learn the language, helping to teach the French

classes in a school there in exchange for his living and for lessons in English.

But his grand-uncle died soon after, and left a comfortable sum of money to Félix, who promptly returned to France. There he decided to become a tanner of leather, and learned the trade thoroughly, working every day like an ordinary laborer in order to become really efficient.

Before long Félix married, and he continued to prosper in business. He settled at Havre, where he became Deputy-Mayor, and from that position he gradually rose, through sheer ability and good sense, to very high positions in the government. He at length became Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies, and then Minister of Marine. He loved horses, and was a good rider and a fine shot; and in his brief military experience in the Franco-Prussian war he had behaved so well that he was awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor.

This taste of military life gave him a love for the army, to which he was extraordinarily kind and indulgent. As he was a somewhat vain man, he had many photographs of himself taken in riding boots and spurs in costumes which set off his fine figure.

But this was a harmless weakness, and on the whole Félix Faure served his country honestly and well, if not with any especial brilliance. And then one day he died suddenly at the Elysée Palace of a cerebral congestion.

All this while the French Republic was making some wise laws in the interest of the people. There was gradually more and more freedom. People could meet together in groups whenever they wanted to, the newspapers could print almost whatever they chose. Working people could form trades-unions, and defend themselves from employers who happened to be unjust or tyrannical.

All these things were helping to make the Republic a really democratic institution. Its motto was "Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood." While making many mistakes, owing to

the weakness or corruption of some men, yet the Republic was constantly trying to give the people their just rights, and often succeeding. But there were terrible trials still ahead of it, as you shall hear later.

At the death of Félix Faure, Emile François Loubet was elected President. Monsieur Loubet was then sixty-one years old, short of stature, with a fine brow, a gray beard, and a kindly expression in his eyes which indicated an amiable disposition. He was born at Marsanne, near Montélimar, a town famous for its delicious nougat.

Monsieur Loubet came of a highly respectable old family, whose men often occupied prominent positions in the community.

Young Loubet learned to swim when very young, and once had the pluck and skill to save the life of a schoolmate. This was a good beginning, for any kind of life.

When he was nineteen years old, he was sent with his brother to complete his studies in Paris, and as they were far from rich, the two boys rented a room on the sixth floor of a decent house. There they studied hard, and played when they could, sharing in the happy student life of that famous part of Paris known as the Latin Quarter.

Emile studied so well that he was able to take his lawyer's degree in six years. Then he returned home to practice his profession.

He was made mayor of Montélimar, and frequently served as a member of the Chamber of Deputies. He rose to several higher positions, and then to the highest his country could offer him, that of President.

It is said that Loubet was so polite that everybody liked him, and that he was more generous to the poor than many richer Presidents had been.

Monsieur Loubet had the usual experience of French Presidents of that time, and a bomb was thrown at his carriage while the young King of Spain was riding in state with him through the streets of Paris in 1904. They were coming

home from a gala performance at the beautiful Opera House, but fortunately the bomb, thrown by a Spanish anarchist, did no harm.

Loubet served his entire term of seven years, but he did not wish to be reëlected. A great many events which had to do with the future fortunes of France took place during his administration. The friendship between France and England was much strengthened, thanks to the efforts of French statesmen, and thanks also to the great popularity in France of Prince Edward of England, who was then Prince of Wales, and later became King Edward VII.

France's friendship with Russia had improved, also, and it was thought that these friendships would be valuable in defending France from invasion by Germany, which was always more or less threatening.

The next President was Monsieur Clément Armand Fallières, and here again the people themselves furnished a president for their country. For Fallières was the grandson of a respectable blacksmith at Mézin, a little town where millions of corks were manufactured.

Monsieur Fallières' father was a thrifty clerk who left his son a small vineyard, and Armand became a wine grower on a modest scale. But he was not satisfied with this obscure occupation. He studied law, became an advocate, and was made mayor of the town where he lived.

After that he did very much the same as the other Presidents we have read about: he rose from one position to another, always rising higher, until finally he was elected President.

The administration of Monsieur Fallières was not a brilliant one.

He was a good man, who rose at seven in the morning and took a walk like any other citizen of Paris. He lived a simple and thrifty life—some people thought him too thrifty for a President. He was a good sportsman too, and a crack

shot. On the whole, he was what is called a safe man, causing no disturbances politically.

During his term of office, however, Monsieur Georges Clémenceau became Minister of the Interior, nobody suspecting at that time the great work which this remarkable Frenchman was to do later for his country.

Clémenceau was at first a doctor, then an editor and writer, and statesman. He had long been a member of the Chamber of Deputies for Paris, and had held various offices of authority. He is—for at this writing he is still living—a man of iron will, with a nervous temperament which he controls wonderfully well. We shall hear more about him, for he was destined to be for several years, later on, probably the most important man in France.

During this time France was always having more or less trouble with Germany, chiefly about their mutual claims in Morocco in Northern Africa. Once, the German Emperor William II., chiefly known as the Kaiser, landed, himself, at Tangier, in Morocco, saying that the French had no rights there. Once he sent a gunboat called the *Panther* to the Port of Agadir, as a serious threat to the French, and French statesmen then had great difficulty in avoiding war.

Incidents like this occurred several times, so that the fear of war hung over the country all the time. But the more menacing Germany became, the stronger grew Great Britain's friendship for France, and the more angry she became against Germany. And the just anger of France against this tyrannical neighbor increased, too.

Besides these external troubles, France had internal ones, also. There was unrest among the working people, both clerks and laborers. They thought themselves not well enough paid, or not justly treated, and strikes were often occurring. Twice the great city of Paris was without any light and the underground trains were stopped, because the employees of the Electric Light and Motor Power Company went on strike.

It was a dangerous time for Paris, but the strike was not a success, and the man who had organized it, named Pataud, was obliged to hide himself in Belgium to escape legal punishment.

School teachers were also dissatisfied, as well as railway men and many others, and there were disturbances in the wine-making districts about their affairs, and in the North of France about the high cost of food.

But the most dangerous trouble of all, though people did not realize it then, was the threatening attitude of Germany towards France. Still nothing definite occurred as yet, and the French parliament continued to try to satisfy everybody in the country, a very difficult and even impossible task. But many able men devoted their lives to it, and some more selfish and less scrupulous ones used it as a means for their own advancement.

You must understand that the French presidents have very little power themselves. But they have the important privilege of choosing their own Prime Ministers, who in their turn choose their Ministers of War, Marine, Interior, etc. But, on the other hand, these Prime Ministers themselves are subject to the authority of the French Congress, which consists of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. So you see that the real rulers of France are the members of the Parliament or Congress.

There are six hundred and two members in the Chamber of Deputies, for France and her Colonies, and they hold office for four years. The Senators are elected for nine years.

They are all elected, directly and indirectly, by the people.

The French President receives a salary of 600,000 francs, or $120,000 a year, and as he has to receive visiting sovereigns and dignitaries from all over the world, he receives another 600,000 francs for the enormous expenses of entertaining.

CHAPTER XC

THE COMING OF THE GREAT WAR

President Fallières was succeeded in 1913 by Monsieur Raymond Poincaré, a distinguished statesman and barrister, and a man of cultivated taste and excellent good sense.

President Poincaré had been a Senator and then Prime Minister before becoming President. He comes of a very able family, his brother and his cousin both having been famous mathematicians and scientists.

Monsieur Poincaré soon showed that it was his intention to use all the power that was available for him. In fact, he has done so and with success.

As he perfectly realized the danger hanging over his country on account of the constant threats and ill-will of Germany, who really wanted to take away another portion of France for herself, as she had taken Alsace and Lorraine, he spent much effort in strengthening the relations of France with England and Russia, whose help he knew would be necessary in case of war. For France had less than 40,000,000 people, while Germany had 70,000,000. No matter how brave and valiant a nation is, it can be overcome by numbers and superior force. So Poincaré made visits to England and Russia, and did the best he could for his beloved France.

The friendship between England and France is called the *entente cordiale,* and represents friendship, and a business arrangement, not a real treaty.

Statues of Queen Victoria and of Edward VII. of England were set up at Nice and Cannes in Southern France, and the

President went to their inauguration, and made eloquent speeches in memory of these two sovereigns who had both loved France. In spite of some political differences, France and England were really friends.

Little by little France had cultivated these friendly alliances to save her in time of need. With the United States she had always had friendly and brotherly relations, because they were both republics, though so different in many ways from each other.

The great Frenchman, Lafayette, had brought soldiers and money, and had fought himself, to help the United States in her efforts to be independent of England, her mother country, who at one time had been unjust to her; and ever since that time the friendly feeling between France and the United States had been constantly growing.

So France was not alone, while she faced the hostile attitude of Germany. But because Germany's attitude was so hostile, the most enlightened French statesmen and people felt sure that some day there would be war again. France had tried to conciliate Germany, and the Germans mistook these peaceful acts for weakness.

So, when the war did break out, like a thunderclap, in 1914, the French nation, as a whole, was not completely surprised. But all the nations were surprised by the suddenness of it.

A few people realized that Germany had been making extraordinary preparations for war for some time, that the great Krupp gun factories at Essen were working feverishly. But still the greater number of people did not think it could be possible, and went on about their daily affairs as if everything were all right.

In fact, many men of authority had said that, because of the frightful size and power of the latest invented guns, and other war machinery, no war could happen, because men would not be willing to go to war at all under such horrible conditions.

But yet, men did go to war under even more horrible conditions than any one had ever imagined.

The first thing that occurred to bring on this worst war in the history of the world—the Great War, as it is called—was the murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife. He was the heir to the Austrian throne, and he was assassinated by an Austrian Serb in the city of Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia, one of the Balkan States in Europe. This occurred on June 28, 1914. The Serb had killed the Archduke because he considered him and his government an enemy to Serbia.

Austria, pushed on by Germany who wanted war, then bullied little Serbia in such a way that it all happened as Germany wished, and she declared war on France on August 3, 1914.

The Germans knew that France was only partially prepared for war, thanks to the ideas of some of her politicians, who had persisted in believing in peace. So the Germans, who had the strongest army the world has ever known, planned to invade little Belgium, crush her with their mighty armed forces, and then march rapidly on Paris, and take that city, and Northern France also, within the brief period of six weeks.

"We shall bleed France white," the Germans said. And as they had come to hate England more and more, because of many reasons, among them being jealousy of her sea-power, they were determined to conquer England too, if they could.

Their Kaiser has spoken in contempt of the English as a "Nation of shop-keepers," but we know that though England has much commercial trade, yet she has produced men like Newton and Bacon and Shakespeare, and many other shining geniuses, so she is not so commercial as the Germans chose to think her.

As for the United States, the Germans did not think very much of that country with respect to war. It was such a peaceful country, totally unprepared for war, and then there

were so many Germans living there—probably about nineteen millions of them—and of course they would be on the side of their fatherland. This was a war in Europe, America was far away, and the Americans deeply absorbed in their own affairs, so the Germans thought them of no great importance in this case. But we shall see how they had to change their minds.

The Germans had promised, in a treaty with other nations, never to invade the territory of little Belgium. But as soon as they saw that it was easier for them to go through Belgium to reach France than by any other way, they broke their promise, called the solemn treaty "a scrap of paper," and marched through Belgium with such regiments and regiments of gray-coated men, and such miles of cannon, as poor Belgium had never dreamed of.

But, small as she was, Belgium, under her great King Albert and his brave wife Elizabeth, made up her mind to fight this horrible monster of an army. It was like David fighting the giant Goliath, only Belgium did not win the battle. Yet she will always be renowned for her great moral and physical courage at a time when everything depended upon her.

For while her gallant soldiers were fighting and dying at Liége and Namur, France had time to mobilize, that is, to call all her soldiers and citizens to arms to defend France. England had time, too, to decide what she should do in this awful crisis. Her people did not really understand what had happened, and they did not want to go to war. But when they saw little Belgium facing that immense army from Germany, the great heart of England beat faster, and she resolved to fight for the right against the might of the enemy.

Later on Italy too was obliged to come to a serious decision, and she joined France and England and Russia, and these countries were called the Allies, while Germany and Austria stood together and were called the Central Empires.

Now, as for the wonderful French people, they rose as one

man against the German foe. Though not well prepared, their armies were soon in the field with many "seventy-fives," as the most famous French guns are called. But though these are remarkable guns, shooting far and easy to move about, yet the Germans had heavier and stronger guns, shooting farther. Unfortunately, the French had more seventy-fives than any other kind of gun, as her military men had thought they would be the most useful.

The Germans had learned that they could move their men and their guns much faster by automobiles and motor trucks than by railways. So, for the first time in history, the German armies, infantry and artillery, were chiefly moved forward by motor transit, and this enabled them to drop down on their enemies like lightning.

The result was fairly overwhelming, on account of the numbers and the rapidity of the Germans. They marched swiftly through smiling little Belgium, leaving death and horror in their path, and were soon in France.

Now, the French had rushed some of their regiments into Belgium. The French soldiers marched away, gayly singing, and their sad wives and mothers and children hid their tears and smiled too, so as not to weaken the courage of the soldiers. The girls and women tied bouquets of flowers on the bayonets of their guns, and laughed with them, and everybody hoped for a speedy victory.

But the French did not know—nobody knew—how strong the German armies were. And so when they first met them in battle the French were beaten by the larger guns of their foes, and were compelled to retreat, weary and wounded.

But they rallied immediately, and went back to the attack, even though the soldiers knew now that the Germans had more and stronger guns than themselves. Yet all of them—rich or poor, learned or ignorant—were willing to die for their beloved France, if need be.

And thousands and thousands of them died from the very

beginning, and the hearts of many mothers and fathers and wives and children were broken.

But though there is nothing so horrible as war, we must not forget that to die for a great cause, for right against wrong, is not horrible, but heroic and sublime. And in this world-war millions of men of many nations have died like that.

Well, it seemed for a while as if this colossal German army, with its regiments and guns, its Zeppelin air-ships and airplanes, would march through France as it had done through Belgium. The English knew that if the Germans could reach the Northern seacoast of France, they might then attack, and even succeed in invading, England.

So the English sent over their soldiers and guns into France across the English Channel as fast as they could gather them together. And the immense English Fleet fought on the sea and guarded the coasts while the English armies began to fight on land.

But it was the Fleet that was the most valuable for the Allies, for it "bottled up" the German Fleet, and helped the French ships to protect the French coast, and did many other most valuable duties, which we have not room to tell about.

Now, as we have said, it looked for a time as if the Germans would be able to march through France, driving her brave but less well-equipped armies out of their way, until they might march straight into Paris as they had done in 1870. If they could take Paris, then it was very likely they would win the war.

France shuddered at this thought and resolved that, if she had to shed the last drop of her blood, *it should never be.*

The Parisians were calm and brave. Many little children and sick people were taken out of the city to safer places, as it was possible that Paris might have to suffer the misery of another siege. Housewives began buying extra provisions to store in their homes in case of this event. People looked grave indeed as each day they read in their papers that the

gigantic German army was drawing nearer to Paris under General von Kluck—or General "One o'Clock" as some English soldiers used to call him in disdain.

Now some remarkable things happened.

You must understand that armies are moved around on certain well-studied plans which are called military strategy—as the pieces are moved around on a checker board. All armies need strategy to be successful, but the weaker army needs it even more than the stronger one.

The French had some great strategists among their army officers, and one of them was General Joffre, then their commander-in-chief.

Joffre was not only a fine strategist and officer, but he was greatly loved by his men to whom he was so kind and fatherly that they affectionately called him *"Grandpère."*

General Joffre, seeing his brave soldiers retreating before the oncoming foe, had conceived a wonderful plan. This plan he carefully worked out. Part of it was to command his armies to continue retreating before the Germans. They did so, and in this way they lured the Germans almost to the gates of Paris, while the Germans only thought that they were driving their enemies to destruction, and would soon be in Paris. They were expecting to have a wild good time in the beautiful city they wanted so much to see and conquer.

Nearer to Paris they came, the Frenchmen under orders to retreat before them, and suffering bitterly from this terrible humiliation. They wanted to stop retreating and fight, though they died on the spot. But they had to obey orders, and the orders were "Retreat." What can Joffre be thinking of, they thought, to shame us like this? But Joffre knew what he was doing, and he knew his men.

He was working day and night on his great plan. He ordered General Galliéni, the Commander of the Paris Army of defense, to send men to him as fast as he could, and in any way he could. Galliéni was a man of great ability and sense. He hired all the taxi-cabs and other motors in Paris to help

carry his soldiers to Joffre. Such a thing had never been seen before.

When the right moment came, Joffre suddenly ordered his soldiers to stop retreating. His order was read to all the impatient regiments. It was a noble Order, and will always be famous. It told his men to stop and turn and fight, and not to yield one inch of their ground, but if necessary to die where they stood. "Cost what it may, the hour for the advance has come; let each man die in his place rather than fall back."

It was the death-knell of many brave and splendid men, illustrious or obscure, but it electrified the Frenchmen whose hearts joyfully answered the heroic call, and it won the great battle of the Marne.

This was the real defeat of Germany in the Great War, though it occurred in early September, 1914, and the war went on for four and a half years longer. But the Battle of the Marne broke all Germany's plans for a speedy victory. She could never get to Paris afterwards, though she had been so near, and came so near again several years later.

The English had little part in this great battle. It was a French battle and a French victory, one of the greatest victories in all the history of France.

The first shots were fired about twenty miles east of Paris. Joffre had let the Germans come as near as that. But he knew his plans, and he knew what a French army is at its best.

The battle lasted from September 5 to September 10. Its fate was several times uncertain, so uncertain that victory was almost lost. But on the morning of the tenth, the weary but resolute French army perceived, to their surprise, that Von Kluck's soldiers were gone.

But Von Kluck's army was not destroyed, though it was defeated. It retreated, and prepared for more fighting.

The great general, Ferninand Foch, commanded part of the French troops in this immense battle, and helped mater-

ially to win it. His regiments were such determined fighters that they were called the "Iron Corps." But people did not know then that some day Foch would be Commander-in-Chief, not only of the French, but of all the Allied armies.

When we realize that there were about two and a half million men engaged in the battle of the Marne, we will understand one reason why this World War was the most tremendous struggle in the history of the world. The battle front was about one hundred and fifty miles long, and hundreds of thousands of soldiers were killed or wounded. No such battle had ever been heard of before.

The French now pursued the retreating German troops, and in this they received valuable help from the British who came, fresh and vigorous, to the task.

But the Germans stopped retreating when they reached the Aisne river, and there they "dug themselves in," as the saying goes. That is, they dug trenches, and fired at the enemy from shelter, instead of exposing themselves in the open country. This was the beginning of the trench warfare that lasted through several years. It forced all the Allies to dig themselves in too, and the world beheld the dreadful spectacle of millions of men living under the earth like moles, in caves and dug-outs of all sorts. Needless to say, such an unnatural way of living was very bad, and killed many of them, or made them invalids.

CHAPTER XCI

FOUR YEARS OF FIGHTING

One after another, other huge battles took place, with immense numbers of men engaged. Napoleon's greatest battles were small by comparison, so far as the number of troops was concerned.

At the battle of Ypres the British won after heroic fighting. In this battle the Germans introduced the use of poison gas, and as the British were not prepared to defend themselves, the results were horrible. The Germans not only began the use of poison gas, which all nations were forbidden to use, but they invented machines for sending flames upon their enemies. Such methods of fighting seem wholly barbaric to civilized people.

As the Germans made use of gas and flame, however, so the Allies, to defend themselves, were forced to use them also, and war became a more hideous nightmare than it had even been known to be before.

On the Yser river the French and Belgians won. But it would not be possible to tell of all the battles, some won by the French, some by the British, some by Germany. But most of the fighting fell to the share of the heroic French armies.

Later, Russia was defeated by Germany, and a revolution broke out there, during which the Czar and all his family of lovely daughters and his one little son were brutally murdered. This revolution still continues, and no one knows, at the time of this writing, how it will end.

Italy materially helped the Allies by helping to defeat Austria. But in the second year of the Great War, Germany won more victories than any one else, and the case looked very dark for the Allies.

Then England tried to keep food from being landed in Germany, and succeeded more or less, but not enough to do Germany great harm. She still had more guns and ammunition than the Allies, and enough food to keep going.

But gradually the Allies were able to get quantities of food and war supplies from America, and this helped them very much.

After the Marne, the next great French battle was Verdun. In this battle so many Frenchmen died willingly to save France and civilization, that we are thrilled when we speak the name VERDUN.

Verdun was a city and a fortress. The fortress was one of the strongest in the world before the Great War. But when men learned what the gigantic German guns did in Belgium, they knew that no fortress, as they were then built, could stand against them.

So the defense of Verdun was made by the bodies of the soldiers themselves, for their forts could not protect them against this new artillery.

Also, most of the younger French soldiers had now been killed or wounded, and the men who defended Verdun were men of early middle age and older, men who had wives and children and homes to give up for the sake of dying for France and for the Right.

They died by hundreds of thousands. They said that their enemies "should not pass." They knew that if they let them pass, they would take Verdun, and attack all the French troops behind it, and that this would perhaps enable the Germans to win the war, such was the military situation of the French at that time.

So they did not let the Germans pass. Every child should always remember how the French soldiers gave their lives to

keep back a cruel enemy, to save France, and to save our civilization.

Men who saw French regiments marching to their fighting places at Verdun have told the world how they looked, how calm, and weary, and resolute and noble they were, every one. The present writer has seen them when they arrived at the hospital, wounded, from Verdun, and there it was the same. Calmness, resignation, patience under suffering, and still the spiritual meaning of "THEY SHALL NOT PASS" written on their war-soiled faces and glowing in their dazed eyes.

Verdun was like a long heroic poem in the story of the World War. Everywhere, in every nation of the world where the carnage of men is understood, people were filled with wonder and admiration for France.

And these were not the trained soldiers of the Great Napoleon, or of the conquering Louis XIV., but mostly plain men of the French Republic, farmers, shoemakers, men of every sort.

The President of the Republic, Monsieur Poincaré, often made journeys to the front to visit the soldiers, to congratulate them when they were victorious, to cheer them when the battle went against them. And when, in 1917, he made Georges Clémenceau his Prime Minister, he did a great thing for France.

Clémenceau fought those politicians whose foolish ideas were dangerous to the cause of the war, and rebuked leaders who grew weary and wanted the war to end anyhow, just so that it ended, and he rooted out a few traitors, and drove them from office. "I am making war, I am making war," he repeated many times to these discouraged and discouraging men, and he went about his business like a young man, though he was nearly eighty, making constant dangerous trips to the front to see the soldiers and cheer them up with whatever good news he could bring them, and endearing himself to the whole nation.

The name of Clémenceau will always be remembered when France's part in the Great War is told.

Meanwhile the Allies wondered why the United States of America did not enter the war, and help them to defeat Germany. But America was far away, and her people did not understand the situation even as well as the Allies did. And the Allies did not understand exactly either, for a time. It was all too big to be easily understood.

But when the news came continually of dreadful deeds done by German troops—of the burning of the wonderful ancient library of Louvain, in Belgium, of the murder of innocent civilians, of old men and women and children; of the carrying off, or deportation, of men, women and children from their homes, to be made to work for Germany, like slaves, against their own lands and people; of the German troops shooting husbands in the presence of their wives; and placing old men and women in front of them when they advanced upon the French or Belgians, to protect themselves from being shot, because they knew the French and Belgians would not shoot down their own people—these things, slowly but surely, showed everybody that this war was not just a war between nations, as other wars had been, but a war of scientific barbarism against civilization.

For the Germans, instead of making use of their great scientific knowledge only for the good of mankind, used it to murder and destroy. Their idea was that Might made Right, and of course that idea is uncivilized and un-Christian.

The submarine boats began to play a considerable part in the war on the seas.

There is an amusing fact in connection with submarines, which shows how very small creatures can be useful to men. It seems that white mice were kept on a certain British submarine to save it from destruction. But how could that be? you will ask. The submarines are run by patrol, and these small mice are very sensitive to its odor. They smell it before any human being can. As soon as the fumes reach their

nostrils they begin to squeal, and the boat is warned that a submarine is approaching.

Now, all the leading nations possessed submarines, but they had never made use of them except in accordance with the rules of honorable warfare.

So when the Germans began to use their submarine boats to destroy helpless ships, even hospital ships with sick and wounded soldiers on board; when they finally sank the big English steamship, the *Lusitania,* on May 7, 1915, filled with helpless English, American and other passengers who had nothing to do with the fighting, people began to be so horrified that even America rose up in indignation.

America now made every effort to persuade the Germans to give up their unfair method of fighting, but without success. The Germans persisted in their own ideas. So America entered the Great War on April 6, 1917, and soon proved to the German nation that she both could and would fight, and that she too would die for the cause of right and justice.

So Germany found herself facing not only the nations she herself first attacked, France and Belgium, but all the greatest and many of the small nations of the world, all combined against her. Germany had only Austria for an ally, and Austria was growing weaker and weaker owing to many defeats.

And, despite all her efforts, Germany had never got to Paris. So when she found that she could not come near enough to the city to capture it, she decided to attack it with bombs, and frighten the Parisians so that the *morale,* or character, of the nation would grow weaker. She dropped bombs down upon the city, even at night when people were sleeping helplessly in their beds. The bombs were dropped from Zeppelins, and from airplanes. When the airplanes raided Paris and dropped their terrible bombs at night on the sleeping city, the people went down into their cellars, with their children and their dogs and cats, and waited until their own airplanes and anti-aircraft guns drove the enemies away.

They knew that their aviators, like their greatest air-hero, Georges Guynemer, were men of heroic and knightly courage, and they had faith that the enemy would be beaten off.

Finally, one day a huge shell fell upon Paris, and no one could tell where it came from. This was a really horrible mystery. Nobody felt safe in the least when a shell fell like that from no one knew where. But it was found that it came from a monster gun which could send its heavy shells from a distance of about seventy-eight miles. Nobody knew that such a gun was in existence, or that it could be made. But there it was, and its shells fell upon Paris day after day, at different times, and nobody could stop them because nobody could tell where the monster gun was hidden.

At last, the French discovered the giant gun, and destroyed it, and then the Parisians could breathe more freely.

All these attacks caused the city much annoyance. They killed a few people, and injured a few buildings. But the Parisians were not seriously alarmed, and went quietly about their affairs every day as usual, even when the long-distance gun was booming at intervals over their defenseless heads. People were told to walk on certain sides of the streets, as they were less dangerous, and they would cross over, and sometimes laugh as they did so. They knew that they had a wonderful army now, and were not afraid, even if some of them might get killed. Everywhere, and nearly all the time, the French people believed in victory for France.

This time Paris escaped the misery of such a siege as she had to suffer in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870. The city never lacked sufficient food of some kind, but often had to go without milk, butter, eggs, cheese, or flour or various other necessary things. Because these things were difficult to get, the prices of them became very high. This caused suffering among the very poor people, those whose health or age prevented them from working in the big munition factories, where everybody was well paid. But much was done to assist the poor.

They suffered from cold too, for coal was so scarce at times that even rich people could not get any. Yet, there was no siege, and the city was on the whole very fortunate.

But, all the same, very many beautiful monuments of France were destroyed during the war—ancient castles and palaces, and town halls and churches, and innumerable fine old houses built in former centuries, which can never be replaced. Among them is one of which we must especially speak.

When the Germans were turned back at the battle of the Marne, and found that they had to retreat and renounce going to Paris—after all their boasting that they would be there within six weeks after the war began, dining and enjoying themselves—they were furious. They decided to wreak their fury on the fine old city of Rheims. They bombarded it, and they sent great destructive shells upon its beautiful ancient Cathedral. This, as you remember, was the Cathedral where Charles VII. was crowned in the presence of the Maid of Orleans, Joan of Arc.

The Germans not only bombarded this great Cathedral then, but they continued to do so at intervals for three successive years.

You will not be surprised to know that most of the lovely old city was destroyed, and that the Cathedral—a monument that the whole civilized world revered and loved for its stately beauty and its marvelous history—was ruined under the barbaric German attack. The building still stands, marred and outraged, its priceless stained glass windows destroyed, its statues, done by the loving hands of real artists, shot to pieces.

To kill a beautiful thing like that seems as revolting as to commit a murder.

While the city of Rheims was incessantly bombarded, the few inhabitants who persisted in remaining lived in cellars, and in the great wine-caves of the city. There they held church services, and there the children went to school while German artillery thundered above them.

The children of France were very brave and lovable during this war. At a town called Pont-à-Mousson, the children wore gas-masks to school, because so much poison gas came from the German bombs that their parents feared they might be killed while they were studying or reciting. When bombs were falling upon the city of Nancy, a little French girl pushed her tiny sister out of danger, and lost her own life in doing so.

Children tried to work like grown people, to help their mothers when their fathers were killed in battle. We have seen little boys in Paris coming home so weary, with pallid grimy faces, from factory labor, that they would fall asleep in the underground trains that brought them home. They were trying to be little men, to take the places of their fathers.

Many French children have died in the invaded regions from insufficient food or care during the war, and many have become little invalids in consequence of the dreadful things they had to suffer.

Among other things which made the Great War different from all the others, was the important work that women did. They not only nursed the wounded, as they had done before, of course, but they wore uniforms very much like men's uniforms, and went right up to the front under fire to carry food and drink and comforts to the fighting men.

Besides that, they drove powerful motor trucks and ambulances, and helped like men in any way they were permitted, and in every way that they were able.

Besides, they helped take the places of the men who had been called to arms, working in the munition factories, and in the country fields to raise food, and in many other departments of war work. And the great charitable work they did was enormous. In this war it was a surprise to see how many kinds of men's work women could do very well.

In Russia, before her revolution ruined her armies, there was a company of women fighters who called themselves the

Battalion of Death, and who actually fought like men.

If the French women had not answered the government's call to come and help make ammunition for the French guns, their armies would have had even a harder time than they actually had.

It would seem that all the world helped fight the Great War. We have seen that women helped, and children helped. You know also that many dogs helped in various ways, even in raising money to feed the sufferers. These money-collecting dogs had little money-chests strapped to their backs, and they seemed to know that people should drop in a coin, and to be pleased when they did. Cats were taken to the trenches and dug-outs to help kill the rats that were one of the plagues of this war. Then, the carrier pigeons were of use many times, to take messages and news, and you have seen that even the little white mice did their share.

CHAPTER XCII

VICTORY

Now, when America came into the Great War she brought immense armies of young men, fresh and ready, some guns and ammunitions, and plenty of food. But above all she brought the great moral influence of her entrance into the struggle. It could not but discourage the German soldiers to see those endless regiments of eager young soldiers coming from America. The Germans, too, were tired of everlastingly fighting, but they were not yet really beaten.

America's feat in bringing her immense armies across the Atlantic Ocean is one of the most wonderful things the world has ever seen.

France and England, by their heroism and perseverance, had shown Germany that they would never allow her to win the war. But they had not power enough, now that their soldiers were so tired and so depleted in numbers too, to really bring the war to an end. When the American force was added to theirs, Germany knew that she could never be victorious, but she kept on fighting just the same as ever, hoping the tide would turn in her favor. And she had not much faith in the fighting power of the partially untrained American armies.

She found out that she was mistaken about America as she had been mistaken about the French and the English. She found that, though the Americans had not the training of the French and English soldiers, they were so anxious to

fight and bring the horrible war to an end that their officers could scarcely hold them back on the battlefields.

In 1918 a very important event occurred, and the great genius General Foch was at last made the Commander-in-Chief of all the Allied forces, as many people had wanted him to be, and he planned a great strategy which eventually enabled the Allied armies to win the war. During the four months after Foch became Generalissimo the Germans were constantly defeated in every battle.

At last, after four years and about three months of fighting in all, an armistice was signed by the Allied and the Central Empires, which were Germany and Austria, on November 11, 1918. This armistice was signed at a place near Compiègne, and later the Peace Preliminaries were signed at Versailles, where so many stirring scenes in French history had taken place in the past.

An armistice is only a temporary arrangement. It only meant that fighting should cease for a while, in the hope that peace could be made between the foes.

As Germany had been defeated, she was obliged to agree to many things which the Allies, justly stern, required of her. Their object was to make her pay an indemnity to France for all the French towns and villages and factories and homes and Cathedrals and churches and fields and orchards she had ruined, for the cattle she had stolen along with treasures of all sorts, as well as an indemnity to Belgium for the wrongs done to her.

But everybody knew that Germany could never pay for the lives that had been sacrificed, and the hearts that had been broken.

And the chief desire of the Allies was to place Germany so that she could not go to war again, and bring such anguish and loss to the world as she had done, including herself.

To bring a lasting Peace as soon as possible, a great Peace Conference was called to assemble in Paris, consisting of representatives of all the Powers at war.

Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, who, as representative of the American people, had taken such an influential part in the war, and in the peace negotiations, was the presiding officer of the Conference.

He drew up remarkable plans for the establishment of peace, and for the foundation of a League of all the Nations who wanted peace and fair dealing among men. This was not a new idea, but President Wilson had a new way of dealing with it.

This League was to preserve peace throughout the whole world, and this is what everybody wishes, except the most warlike nations. But as it is very difficult for men to know always just what is right and fair in their dealings with each other, the League is full of problems.

Some people think that all these problems will be solved in time, and that the whole world will be able to live in friendly security. But at the present writing neither the Peace Treaty nor the League has yet been approved by all the nations.

The French people are very anxious for peace, and they hope that it may come, at least for a long time. They care a great deal for civilization, for the arts, for books, for social improvement, for the finer side of life, and war while it lasts injures all these things sadly.

The French cannot forget their illustrious past; but they are a Republican nation now, and they are justly proud of that, too. But Republics require peace in which to develop the real Republican or Democratic idea that all men should be free and equal.

Prime Minister Clémenceau and President Poincaré have done all they were able to do to help bring peace to a suffering world.

Poincaré's term of office ended in 1920, and he was succeeded by Monsieur Paul Deschanel, who was elected President on January 17, 1920.

Monsieur Deschanel, who is sixty-four years old, is the son of Emile Deschanel, a distinguished scholar and writer. The

new President has been a journalist, an editor and a statesman. He has written a number of books, and has devoted himself to a profound study of France.

He has filled many high positions of trust in the Government, and at the time of his election he was President of the Chamber of Deputies, an office which he had occupied for a considerable time, and in which he had become famous for his able and eloquent speeches.

When he was thirty-two years old, he made such a fine speech that everybody was talking about it, and the Sultan of Turkey, who had reason for being particularly interested in the subject of the speech, bestowed special honor upon the young orator by giving him a decoration.

President Deschanel is a genuine Republican patriot, and no doubt he will work for the reconstruction of his war-stricken country with all his heart and strength.

There are many grave questions in international and national affairs to be settled, and chief among them is to know how to keep Germany's hands off France, which she has now invaded three times in a hundred years.

But throughout this terrible war the world has seen France at her highest and best, and has enthusiastically admired "the palpitating and dramatic beauty of the French soul." Those who understand her realize that she is the leader, taking everything into consideration, of the world's true civilization.

CENTRAL CIRCULATION
CHILDREN'S ROOM

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LIST OF KINGS

MEROVINGIAN KINGS

Clovis, the first Merovingian king, reigned 30 years, from 481 to 511 A.D.

The Merovingian kings after Clovis reigned 230 years, from 511 to 752 A.D., with the possible exception of the period between 737-742, when there appears to have been no king.

CARLOVINGIAN KINGS

Pepin	reigned	16	years,	from	752	to 768
Charlemagne	"	46	"	"	768	" 814
Louis I.	"	29	"	"	814	" 843
Charles I.	"	34	"	"	843	" 877
Louis II.	"	2	"	"	877	" 879
Louis III. and	"	3	"	"	879	" 882
Carloman	"	5	"	"	879	" 884
Charles II.	"	4	"	"	884	" 888
Count Eudes	"	10	"	"	888	" 898
Charles III.	"	24	"	"	898	" 922*
Rodolf	"	13	"	"	923	" 936
Louis IV.	"	18	"	"	936	" 954

English Kings who Reigned at the same time.

	Began to reign.
Egbert	800
Ethelwulf	837
Ethelbald	858
Ethelbert	860
Ethelred	866
Alfred the Great	871
Edward (the Elder)	901
Athelstane	925
Edmund (the Elder)	940
Edred	946

* Charles was chosen king in 893, and a little later Count Eudes acknowledged him. In 898 he became sole King of France, a position he retained until 922, when Duke Robert was chosen by the barons as their monarch. He was killed in 923.

CARLOVINGIAN KINGS—(*continued*)								English Kings who Reigned at the Same Time.	
									Began to reign.
Lothaire	reigned	32	years,	from	954	to	986	Edwy	955
								Edgar	958
								Edward	975
								Ethelred the Unready	978
Louis V.	"	1	"	"	986	"	987		
CAPETIAN KINGS									
Hugh Capet	reigned	9	years,	from	987	to	996		
								Edmund (Ironside)	1016
Robert	"	35	"	"	996	"	1031	Canute	1016
Henry I.	"	29	"	"	1031	"	1060	Harold I.	1035
								Hardicanute	1040
								Edward the Confessor	1042
Philip I.	"	48	"	"	1060	"	1108	Harold II.	1066
								William I.	1066
								William II.	1087
								Henry I.	1100
Louis VI.	"	29	"	"	1108	"	1137	Stephen	1135
Louis VII.	"	43	"	"	1137	"	1180	Henry II.	1154
Philip II.	"	43	"	"	1180	"	1223	Richard I.	1189
								John	1199
								Henry III.	1216
Louis VIII.	"	3	"	"	1223	"	1226		
Louis IX.	"	44	"	"	1226	"	1270		
Philip III.	"	15	"	"	1270	"	1285	Edward I.	1272
Philip IV.	"	29	"	"	1285	"	1314	Edward II.	1307
Louis X.	"	2	"	"	1314	"	1316		
Philip V.	"	6	"	"	1316	"	1322		
Charles IV.	"	6	"	"	1322	"	1328	Edward III.	1327
VALOIS KINGS									
Philip VI.	reigned	22	years,	from	1328	to	1350		
John	"	14	"	"	1350	"	1364		
Charles V.	"	16	"	"	1364	"	1380	Richard II.	1377

							English Kings who Reigned at the Same Time.	
								Began to reign.
VALOIS KINGS—(*continued*)								
Charles VI.	reigned	42	years,	from	1380	to 1422	Henry IV.	1399
							Henry V.	1413
Charles VII.	"	39	"	"	1422	" 1461	Henry VI.	1422
Louis XI.	"	22	"	"	1461	" 1483	Edward IV.	1461
Charles VIII.	"	15	"	"	1483	" 1498	Edward V.	1483
							Richard III.	1483
							Henry VII.	1485
VALOIS-ORLEANS KING								
Louis XII.	reigned	17	years,	from	1498	to 1515	Henry VIII.	1509
ORLEANS-ANGOULÊME KINGS								
Francis I.	reigned	32	years,	from	1515	to 1547		
Henry II.	"	12	"	"	1547	" 1559	Edward VI.	1547
							Mary	1553
							Elizabeth	1558
Francis II.	"	1	"	"	1559	" 1560		
Charles IX.	"	14	"	"	1560	" 1574		
Henry III.	"	15	"	"	1574	" 1589		
BOURBON KINGS								
Henry IV.	reigned	21	years,	from	1589	to 1610	James I.	1603
Louis XIII.	"	33	"	"	1610	" 1643	Charles I.	1625*
Louis XIV.	"	72	"	"	1643	" 1715	Charles II.	1660
							James II.	1685
							Mary II. and William III.	1689
							William III.	1694
							Anne	1702
							George I.	1714
Louis XV.	"	59	"	"	1715	" 1774	George II.	1727
							George III.	1760
Louis XVI.	"	19	"	"	1774	" 1793		
France a Republic		11	"	"	1793	" 1804		
" an Empire		10	"	"	1804	" 1814		

* Charles I was beheaded in 1649, and the Commonwealth instituted (1649–1660).

BOURBON KINGS—(*continued*)							English Kings who Reigned at the Same Time.	Began to reign.
Louis XVIII.	reigned	10	years,	from	1814	to 1824	George IV.	1820
Charles X.	"	6	"	"	1824	" 1830		
BOURBON-ORLEANS KING								
Louis Philippe	reigned	18	years,	from	1830	to 1848	William IV.	1830
							Victoria	1837
Second Republic		4	"	"	1848	" 1852		
Second Empire		18	"	"	1852	" 1870		
Third Republic				"	1871	" ——	Edward VII.	1901
							George V.	1910

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